THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

THE GREAT PIONEER FAMILY PAPER OF AMERICA.

Vol. 68. PUBLICATION OFFICE No. 706 SANSOM ST. PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1889. $2.50 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. FIVE CENTS A COPY. No. 26

DREAMS.

I loved her once with all my heart and soul;
Her smile or frown was then my noon or night;
She walked with me and was my soul's delight,
For I was happy in her sweet control.

How pleased and proud I was when first I stole
The unexpected kiss, and put to fright
Her ruby lips! How all the world seemed bright,
And Love's fair union no far-distant goal!

Our hands were all but joined when cruel Fate,
With stern, relentless frown, stepped in between,
And there remains; while I, without a mate,
Am left alone to dream what might have been;
And 'tis not half so sad as what it seems,
For now I spend my happiest hours in dreams.

Shadowed by Fate.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NULL AND VOID," "MADAM'S WARD," "THE HOUSE IN THE CLOSE," "WHITE BERRIES AND RED," "ONLY ONE LOVE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ONE afternoon in the merry month of May, the tall iron gates of Knighton Revels were swung open by the old lodge keeper, and a young lady rode through.

She was tall, though so admirably proportioned that there was not the slightest suspicion of "gawkiness;" slim, and, as the ancient writers were fond of saying, "of graceful demeanor." In addition to a good figure, the gods—who, when they are in a good humor, are lavish—had bestowed upon her a face, which falls to the portion of few of the daughters of men.

Of a clear oval, almost colorless, save when excited, with large, dark eyes, shaded by long brows that swept the ivory-tinted cheeks, framed in a silken setting of soft black hair; with lips cleanly cut as a statue's—Iris Knighton's face was beautiful enough to have furnished a model for a Titian or a Vandyck. But great as those painters were, in no one of their canvases is there a face so full of expression and so soul moving.

Thank Heaven, beauty is not uncommon in these lands; but there are two kinds of beauty: that which one admires and—forgets, and that which one feels and—remembers; and Iris Knighton's was of the latter kind.

The effect of this lovely face was disastrous enough when one saw it in repose, but when she raised the long lashes and looked at you with one of her peculiar, shady, half-dreamy looks, one lost one's heart at once and for ever.

Byron remarks that the devil has not in all his quiver so deadly an arrow as a soft and beautiful voice; but though Iris Knighton's voice was musical, and capable of playing many tunes, it was the dark eyes which were the deadliest weapons in her armory, and Byron would have been the first to admit it, if it had been his good fortune to have lived long enough to have seen her—and loved her, as he most assuredly would have done!

As the tall, black horse she rode paced in a stately fashion down the road and through the single village street, as if he were proud of his sweet burden, the good folks of Knighton, hearing the sound of hoofs came to their doors, or stood on the pebbly pavement; and the men doffed their hats and the women and children dropped profound but smiling curtseys, for Miss Iris was the daughter of Godfrey Knighton, Esquire, and Lord of the Manor of Knighton Beverly, and the most important lady in the place.

Iris bowed to the respectful, reverential greetings, but in an absent, dreamy fashion, and did not lift her long, dark lashes until she had passed out of the village street on to Knighton Heath; then she pulled up, and, waiting until the groom came beside her, said:

"You can go back, Fenn."

Considering that he had taken the trouble to groom and saddle his horse, and put on his livery, the man might have been justified in looking a little surprised; but his face never moved a muscle, and touching his finger to his hat, he turned and rode back as if the order were quite a matter of course, and the most natural thing in the world.

Iris rode on, still slowly, until she had reached the corner of the heath, then she stopped the horse again, and bending a little forward in the saddle, looked round at the view, which stretched like a panorama in a circle beneath her.

Now, the view was not only a familiar one, but, so to speak, may be said to have belonged to her; for the hedged fields and coppiced woods for many a mile represented the manor of which her father was lord and master.

The Knightons were an ancient and a famous race. It had once been a marquisate; but in the troubled times a Knighton had been on the losing side in politics, and the winner had deprived him of his title and his lands. Later on, when things had settled down, the lands had been restored to them; but the Knightons of the day had refused to accept the restoration of the title.

"A Knighton is a Knighton, and you cannot rob him of his name. It matters little whether you put 'my lord,' or plain 'Mr.' before it."

And although the marquisate had been tendered them more than once since, and quite in recent times, the Knightons of the day had always politely but emphatically declined it.

So it happened that the young lady who sat so still and motionless on her horse, was simply "miss," instead of "my lady."

It will be guessed by the foregoing plain statement of the case, that the Knightons were proud; and it must be confessed that they were. Every family, we are told by people who ought to know, possesses its special and distinctive failing, and the failing of the Knightons was—pride.

They were proud of having had a marquisate; they were proud of having lost it in a good cause; and they were prouder still of having refused its restoration.

To be a Knighton of Knighton Revels, and lord and master of the manor of Beverly seemed to Godfrey Knighton, and to Iris, too almost as good as being King of England.

She was proud, and yet at times one would have thought her the meekest and humblest creature in the world: when, for instance, she was talking to one of her people at some cottage door, or, better still, when she sat, as she would do for hours, with some sick child on her knee or in her arms, while the poor mother stood watching her tearfully, as if her infant were lying asleep in the arms of an angel.

But proud or humble, all Knighton, from the highest to the lowest, were fully convinced that no sweeter, no lovelier being existed than their liege lady, Miss Iris of the Revels.

Whatever she may have been thinking of as she sat with her eyes wandering over the view at her feet, there was a strange tinge of melancholy—scarcely of sadness but of pensive reflection—in her eyes; and it was a curious fact that this faint expression of wistful dreaminess was far too frequent a visitor in those dark and lustrous orbs.

She was the daughter of the richest man in the county; his only child, the heiress to all his immense wealth. No wish was left ungratified. She had, as the old ballad says, "rich satins to wear, rare fruits to eat, and good horses to ride."

All the world, which is so hard and cruel a one for some of us, smiled on her, and yet when she pulled up on Knighton Heath to look at the view, that strange tinge of melancholy crept like a thief into her beautiful eyes.

Perhaps it was that she missed that which crowns most girls' lives with happiness and peace—a mother; for, look back as far as she could, Iris could not from the dim visions of the past bring back any memory of her mother. Ever since she could remember, she and her father had lived alone.

She knew that her mother was an Italian, that her name was like her own, Iris, and that the years of her own childhood had been spent with her father in the land of her mother's birth.

It was from her mother doubtless, that she had got the dark, lustrous eyes, the soft, black hair and long lashes, while her father had contributed the patrician face and the family pride.

In addition to her beauty she had inherited another gift; she had the voice which is given to so many children of the sunny south—a voice as clear and full and musical as a nightingale's; imperial in its strength, and divine in its grace and power of expression.

But exquisite as it was, it was not often heard; for, strange to say, Godfrey Knighton, unlike most fathers, was not pleased when his daughter sang. So she sang in the woods—her own woods, where none came but the gamekeepers or the laborers—or in her own rooms.

Don't jump to the conclusion that, because he did not like to hear his daughter's voice in song, Godfrey Knighton was a hard or unkind father; no man could love a daughter more tenderly, more passionately than he did Iris. Cold, stern, almost forbidding to the rest of the world, he was tenderness itself to her.

"Cold and hard," though expressive enough, scarcely convey any idea of his manner to the world. He was a man who spoke seldom, and smiled never.

Just as a Roman lawgiver, he rarely melted to mercy, and woe be to the poacher caught red-handed in the act, or the thief found in the hen-roost or the peach orchard!

And, though so inflexibly just, he was generous to a fault. There were no poor in Knighton, and no stranger was ever turned away from the Revels' gates until he had appeased his hunger and got something in the way of coin to help him on his way.

But there seemed to hang a cloud over Godfrey Knighton, and the faint tinge of sadness in Iris's eyes was but the vague reflection of a deeper melancholy in his own.

A shadow hung over the Revels, but of its nature and cause every one, even Iris herself, was ignorant.

He had left England a young man of twenty, had left it and disappeared as completely as if he had been dead, and had returned fifteen years afterwards with his young daughter, beautiful even then, though with only a promise of her future loveliness. She was fourteen when he came back, and beyond her age she knew nothing.

Of all that happened to him during his absence, Godfrey Knighton said not one word to any living soul. Of his dead wife he said nothing.

His past life in the far-away south remained as dark and mysterious as it had ever been during his absence, and there was certainly no one of his friends who dared to ask him a single question.

He had married, his wife had died giving birth to a daughter, and Iris was that daughter: that was all that was known, though no one could say that he had actually stated even this much; but the county was only too glad to welcome him back on any terms, and welcomed with open arms the man who was lord of the manor of Beverly and the magnificent Revels which had so long remained closed and desolate.

Iris may have been thinking of all this, or she may have been thinking of nothing at all. Of one thing she certainly was not pondering, and that was—love.

The heiress of the Revels, if she had been as ugly as sin is popularly supposed to be—instead of being most charming and—enticing, alas!—would have been sure to have had plenty of suitors: how much more certain then was Iris Knighton with her almost marvellous beauty and grace!

As a matter of fact there was not a youth within a radius of twenty miles who didn't worship her, and dream of her, and wish that he could, at any rate, die for her; but Iris had remained untouched and unmoved by one and all.

When they came fluttering round her she looked at them with a far-away gaze, and smiled at all their compliments with her absent, dreamy smile; and half-maddened by her indifference they one and all declared that the exquisite creature was just like a lovely statue, all beauty and no heart!

And yet she would sit for hours with a sick child clasped to her bosom, and her proud eyes would grow dim and moist at any story of sorrow and misery, and no one had ever asked her for help and found her heartless or deaf to their appeal.

She sat so long and in so rapt a dream that she did not hear the sound of another horse's feet upon the thick heather, and it was not until the big black horse, who was called, from sheer contrariness, Snow, pricked up his pointed ears, and began to fidget with his front legs, that she awoke, and looking round, saw a gentleman riding towards her.

The faintest, very faintest expression of annoyance—well, scarcely annoyance, but boredom—came into her eyes as she saw him, and she looked half inclined to gather up the reins and fly; but with a sigh she turned Snow's head and sat awaiting the newcomer with a grave, pensive regard in her dark eyes.

He was a young man, with a fair and by no means bad-looking face—though rather too pretty and womanish—and he was dressed as nicely and carefully as if he had come out of the Burlington Arcade: the neatest of coats, the glossiest of hats, the prettiest primrose gloves, the shiniest of boots, and a rare orchid stuck in his button-hole.

As he came nearer his fair face grew first pink and then red, and in his bashfulness and agitation the eyeglass, which had been stuck in his left eye, fell with a clatter among the buttons of his pretty coat.

"G—good-morning, Miss Knighton!" he said; he stammered slightly, and he had a little difficulty with his "r's," which would pronounce themselves like "w's."

"Good-morning, Lord Montacute!" said Iris, and she held out her small gauntleted hand.

His lordship took it and shook it, and grinned, not because he was a fool, which he was not by any means, but because he was head over heels in love with the divine young goddess, and whenever he was near her all his senses seemed to desert him: his heart beat wildly, the color came rushing to his face, and he stammered worse, and found greater difficulty with his "r's" than

usual.

"It—it's a fine morning, isn't it?" he said, fumbling with his eye-glass, after the manner of a nervous man. "Just the morning for wide, isn't? We shall have a—summer here pwesently, sha'n't we? Awfully glad summer's coming, aren't you?"

"Yes," said Iris, in her low, full voice.

There was silence for a moment, while the young man racked his brains for something to say, and couldn't find it, because the only words that rang in his ears were "I love you! I love you!" then Iris looked at his horse, which was panting a little, and said:

"Have you ridden very far, Lord Montacute?"

He colored and stammered. He had seen her from the windows of Montacute Towers, and had dashed into the yard, got his horse saddled, leaped on its back, and simply raced it up the hill to overtake her. That was why the animal panted and threw the white flecks of foam from its mouth.

"Er—er—n—o, not very far. I—I was going to ride over and see Mr. Knighton about the—the"—he hesitated a second for an invention, then wound up—"the hall, you know."

"Oh, yes!" said Iris. "You will find my father at home. He was in the library when I left; and you will catch him before he goes out, I think. I am going to the Holt. Good-bye!" and with a nod and a smile, she touched her horse with the tip of her finger, and was off.

Lord Montacute looked after her, and his head drooped.

All the way up the heath he had resolved as he raced along to ask her boldly and without hesitation to let him come with her; and now—now there she was, almost out of sight; and he was left to carry out his absurd excuse and go down to the levels.

At that moment he would have given his Norman name, his ancestral seat, the Towers, his wealth, everything, to ride beside her, and—she had gone!

For a moment a wild idea of racing after her and putting the request after all, seized him, but he hadn't the courage to meet those deep, lustrous eyes, fixed so calmly and sweetly upon him, and the look of faint wonder and inquiry which he knew would shine in them, and disconsolately, disappointedly, altogether wretchedly, the Earl of Montacute stuck his eye-glass in his eye and rode down the hill.

CHAPTER II.

IRIS rode on with a sigh of relief. She did not dislike Clarence, Lord Montacute by any means, and she would have liked him very much if he hadn't been so obviously and palpably in love with her.

She had dreaded all the time they had stood talking, that he would ask permission to accompany her, and even as she rode away, she feared that he would follow in pursuit, and it was not until she had reached the confines of the heath, and had got into a pretty lane, that she felt quite safe.

The Holt to which she had told Lord Montacute that she was going, was one of the outlying farms—of course belonging to the manor—and was in the occupation of an old nurse of her father's. Iris often rode or drove over to see, and was received as a young goddess deigning to bless the earth by alighting on it for a few short hours.

She was so pleased at having escaped Lord Montacute that, looking round first to see that she was quite alone, she began to sing; and it was just as if a nightingale had mistaken the sun for the moon and had burst into song.

Snow, who knew his beloved mistress's ways, dropped into a walk, the reins fell loosely upon his neck, and Iris, forgetting everything, glided unconsciously from song to song. Now it was an old English ballad, then an Italian barcarolle, and again the soft, plaintive chant, which she could remember hearing the sweet, gentle-voiced nuns singing at vespers.

Suddenly, so suddenly that the song died upon her lips as if smitten by a blow, and Snow started and got on his hind legs, there came upon the air the sound of a huge voluminous bellow.

Iris smiled and patted the horse.

"You stupid!" she said. "It is only the old bull!"

But the bellowing increased and grew so furious, that, more to pacify the horse than to satisfy her own curiosity, she rode up to the hedge and looked over. The smile that still lingered on her lips vanished suddenly, and in place of it came an expression of alarm and disquietude.

She was looking over into a large meadow surrounded by a high hedge, having a four-barred gate at the corner. Near the gate was a big and particularly pugnacious-looking bull, and just below her stood a young man.

The man and the animal stood looking at each other steadily, the latter evidently working himself into a bovine fury, striking the ground with his front feet, lashing his tail and waving his head; the former as evidently wondering how he was to get to the gate, and how long it would be before the bull came dashing across the meadow at him.

Iris looked from the bull to the man; he was young and straight as an arrow—for he had drawn himself up in an unconscious attitude of defiance and readiness; his bare head—his well-worn and battered hat lay on the ground—shone in the sunlight as only a head of brown hair touched with gold can shine; his suit—shooting jacket and leggings both—bore evidences of time and stress of weather, and his hands—as was the back of his neck—were tanned by the sun.

In the first momentary glance Iris knew that he was a gentleman. Presently, without seeing her, he turned his head and she saw that he was handsome.

There was a suggestion of a smile in his dark brown eyes, and about the lips half hidden by a golden moustache which certainly indicated anything but fear, and as if he found the situation rather amusing than otherwise; and Iris reflected the smile. But it was only for a second, for she knew the bull and realized the danger he was in.

A word of warning rose to her lips, but for some reason which she did not analyze, she remained silent and simply waited.

The bull set his head down and uttered another series of bellows, struck at the ground with increased viciousness, and, as if to make sure of its prey, moved slowly towards the spot where the young fellow stood.

He waited a second, then began slowly and steadily to meet the animal, keeping his gaze fixed upon the small eyes of his foe and tightly grasping a short and serviceable oak stick.

Iris sat immovable, her lips apart, her brows contracted with anxiety and suspense. Snow watched the scene with pointed ears and calm observant eyes, and it is probable that he was, being a horse, mentally laying heavy odds on his friend the bull.

Slowly the two combatants approached each other. Iris wondered if it could be possible that the young man thought he could meet in fair fight and hope to overcome that huge brute with a small walking-stick.

But whatever his thoughts and hopes were, he went, as it seemed, to his doom, steadily and unflinchingly.

The proceedings on the part of his foe were so unexpected that the bull stopped as if astounded for a moment, then, as if enraged by the audacity of the man, he uttered a louder roar than any that had preceded it, and came tearing upon him.

Iris turned white to the lips; she saw the young man raise his stick and heard it fall, apparently with the force of an iron bar upon the bull's snout—upon which it seemed to have as much effect as a fly would have done if it lighted there instead—and then, as the bull lowered its head to toss him, she saw the man leap to the left and make for the gate.

The thing, the trick, was done so quickly, so cleverly, so gracefully, that her heart gave a bound, and her cheeks flushed with admiration.

But another emotion,—the first, that of fear,—as quickly took its place.

Quick as the young fellow was the bull was quicker.

Long before the gate was reached, while it still stood, as if mockingly, half open at the corner of the field, the bull had gained upon the man, its hot breath and foaming snout seemed almost upon him.

Then he turned, raised the stick and dealt the brute a second blow, and repeating the leap to the side, he then ran off again.

But this time, of necessity, the direction he fled in was from instead of towards the gate!

Maddened by the blow and the cunning adroitness of the foe, the bull doubled its pace, and with flashing eyes and streaming flanks, he bore down upon his adversary.

Iris's heart seemed to have stopped beating. If she had wanted to cry out now she could not have done it, for her lips seemed fast locked.

She looked round wildly, vaguely for help. But the farm was a mile away; not a soul was in sight, as if in mockery of the human peril, the birds sang brightly in the trees.

The young fellow ran in a slanting line towards her, reached the hedge, and stood there to gather breath. The bull came tearing along, its head down, its red gleaming eyes fixed on the man.

Once more the stick was raised, but this time it missed its aim, and losing his foot by the force of the blow, the young fellow fell to the ground.

It was a lucky accident, for, borne forward by the impetus of his former rush, the bull passed clean over him, and the horns with which he had hoped to gore his adversary rent the empty air instead.

The man jumped to his feet, stood for the space of a breath, as if dazed: and then he made for the gate; the bull turned short on his haunches and was in full pelt after him.

Confused by his fall and the trampling of bull's hoofs, the young fellow ran crookedly, and it was evident that this time the bull would avenge his former failures, and it would be maimed limbs and death for his foe.

The young fellow seemed to feel this, for he looked round the field as if he were vainly trying to find some spot in which he could come to bay: the bull drew nearer and nearer,—another instant or two would settle accounts between them, and all in the bull's favor, when as if she had alighted from Heaven, Iris sprang over the hedge and dropped between them.

Her appearance was so sudden, so unexpected that man and bull pulled up as if shot.

The man was first to recover. Turning his white face towards her he shook his head at her, and panting still, shouted:

"Go back! go away!"

A smile played for a second upon the face of Iris, that was as white as his own, and she galloped towards him.

The bull had recovered by this time, and was after them, bellowing a mad brutal longing for them both.

"The gate, the gate!" cried the young fellow. "Don't mind me! For Heaven's sake go!"

But Iris smiled again. She had not been watching his mode of warfare for nothing, and instead of making for the gate she swerved suddenly, and rode straight towards the bull.

The young fellow stopped as if shot, and dashed towards her, uttering a cry of warning and despair.

The bull, too, stopped, amazed and perplexed; but in another instant he had made up his mind that a lady and a horse were better prey than one man, and he went for the pair.

Snorting with rage and terror, Snow rose on his hind legs, then Iris pulled him round and bounded aside, and the bull passed her.

She looked around then with something like a smile of triumph on her pale face at the success of her manœuvre, but the smile died away as she saw that instead of making for the gate the young fellow was running towards her.

"The gate, the gate!" she cried, speaking for the first time.

"What? And leave you!" he shouted, with a reckless, maddened laugh.

"Come with me, then!" she cried. "Put your hand on my horse! Quick!"

He understood in a moment: ran quickly towards her, and flung his arm over the horse's neck.

In her excitement, in the overwhelming desire to save him, Iris laid her hand on his arm, and grasped it; then, together, they went across the meadow and towards the gate.

A moment of suspense, a moment during which they heard the brute panting and snorting behind them—felt even the hot breath, as it puffed out at their backs—the gate was gained, and they were on the right side.

With a shout the young fellow let go his hold of Snow's neck, and hurling himself at the gate clicked to the latch at the moment the bull dashed against it.

There was not a moment—half a moment—to spare.

Pantingly the young fellow leaned upon the gate and surveyed their adversary, then he turned and went up to where Iris, his preserver, sat upon her horse.

Her bosom, under its tight-fitting habit, was heaving, her lips were half apart, her eyes glowing under their long lashes, but otherwise she sat calm and motionless, the type of a goddess who had descended from Olympus, to preserve and succor poor humanity.

He stood and looked up at her a moment in silence.

His face was still pale, and there were drops like dew upon his golden moustache that fringed his upper lip, and his broad chest heaved in harmony with hers.

"How could you be so mad?" he said at last; and the words seemed a strange mode of expressing his thanks for the life he owed her.

Iris lifted her eyes and let them fall upon him in silence, and the color came welling back into his bronzed cheeks.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said; "but I know I owe you my life. I'm very grateful. But—but it was madness!"

"Was it?" she said, in her low, sweet, musical voice. "It was madness not to have come to you sooner, but—I didn't think of it till you fell."

"You should not have come at all," he said, almost sternly. "It was dangerous, horribly, wickedly dangerous! If your horse had stumbled, or you had fallen——" he stopped, and a slight shudder ran through him. "Besides, I should have got to the gate—No," he broke off, "I should not! I know I should not! You have saved my life! But when I think of the risk you ran, I wish—I do wish most heartily—that you had been miles away."

She sat motionless, looking down at him contemplatively.

No one, not even her father had ever spoken so firmly, so masterfully as this stranger had done.

As she looked down at him, she saw two or three drops of blood run down his wrist and fall to the ground.

A little spasm of pain passed across her lips: all women hate the sight of blood.

"Are you—hurt?" she said.

"Hurt?" No." Then his eyes followed hers, and he put his hand behind him. "At least, if I am I don't feel it. I suppose our friend must have struck me when he came dancing over me. But it is nothing anyway. But you?"

She shook her head.

"Your habit is torn," he said suddenly as his eyes roamed over her anxiously. "You are sure he did not touch you?"

"Quite," said Iris. "No, I am not hurt in the least. But you—I am afraid!"

"No, no," he replied quickly. "The worst harm that I have got is an intolerable thirst!" and he laughed.

"There is a brook in the hollow there," she said. "I will show you."

She walked Snow down the slope, and the young fellow walked by her side, and brushing the dust from his clothes with his uninjured hand.

Every now and then during their short journey he glanced up at the pale face with a vague wonder at its beauty and sweet calmness.

Most girls would have been in a state of palpitating "gush," half laughing, half crying; whereas this beauteous creature, who had descended, as it were, from heaven, on her black horse, was as calm and serene and self-possessed as if he and she had been sauntering through the lanes together all the morning.

"Here is the brook," she said, pointing to the shallow stream that babbled at her feet.

He took a silver folding cup from his pocket and let it stand for a moment in the running water, then was raising it to his lips when he paused.

"Can I offer you some?" he said.

Iris shook her head, then as if altering her mind said—

"Thank you."

He came up to her and held his cup to her. It was so small that her hand, from which she had withdrawn the glove, had to touch his on taking it, and when she had it—it was a collapsible cup—so that it shut up and the water was spilled.

He laughed a frank, yet grave laugh, and there was something in its tone that made Iris smile as if in fellowship.

"They are awkward things if you are not acquainted with them," he said as she murmured an apology: and he took the cup and refilled it.

"Hold it at the top," he said.

Iris put it to her lips, then returned it.

He filled it for himself twice, then stooping down threw the babbling water over his forehead, washed his hands, and came back to her.

Iris watched the whole performance, gone through so quietly and unaffectedly with a grave smile.

"Will you get down and rest a moment?" he said. "I know you must be awfully tired from my own feelings."

"I did not have to run," she said: but she got down, disregarding the hand he extended to her, and stood, leaning her elbow on the saddle. "How did you get into the field?"

"Well, the bull was not there when I first went in," he said. "I turned off the road to rest, and—I think I must have been asleep when our friend came in through the gate which had been left ajar. It looked very amiable at first, and I was admiring

it rather than otherwise, when something in my personal appearance put its back up, and—I think you know the rest."

He laughed, then grew suddenly serious again.

"I haven't yet thanked you properly for coming to my aid," he said, and he raised his dark eyes and looked at her with that look which in a man means so much, perhaps because a man uses it so seldom. "You have saved my life as certainly as that we two stand here. I can't thank you, of course not. But I don't want you to think that I don't understand all that you have done, or that I am ungrateful."

His voice, which Iris thought as musical in its deep, full tones as any she had heard, grew very low and earnest, and a faint color stole into her cheeks.

"You make too much of it," she said. "I don't think that the bull would have hurt me; he knows me."

He shook his head.

"I know that he would have gored you to death."

He paused and turned his head aside, as if the picture his words called up was intolerable.

"You know it?" he went on. "Then you are not a stranger—but, of course not," glancing at Snow, who was placidly cropping the grass as if such a thing as a bull fight had never occurred. "I thought—I don't know why; it was absurd, of course! —that you were as great a stranger as myself. I suppose," with a smile, "because you seemed to drop from the clouds."

Iris remained silent for a moment, and stood flicking softly and meditatively at the rents in her habit.

Then she looked up.

"You are a stranger here?" she said.

He nodded.

"Yes; quite. I am on my way to Glossop."

Iris looked in the direction his eyes had taken, towards the town of Glossop, which stood, a well-known port and harbor, on the line below them.

"Can you tell me how many miles it is?"

"Nineteen—twenty," replied Iris.

"Then I have a long walk," he said.

There was silence for a moment, then he glanced back towards the field.

"I wonder whether our ill-tempered friend would permit me to get my hat——"

"Surely," said Iris, with a touch of color in her cheek, "you would not risk going in there with him again?"

He looked half ashamed.

"I did think of it," he said. "But I beg your pardon. I ought not to have done so. It would be a poor and foolish return for your courage and kindness. No! I had better go bareheaded for the rest of my natural life!"

Iris laughed.

"There is a farm about three-quarters of a mile off," she said. "They will be only too glad to lend—to give you—a hat if you ——"

She stopped suddenly.

"If I mention your name?" he said, looking up swiftly. "May I do so?"

There was curiosity, eagerness in his voice, though he evidently tried hard to conceal them. For some reason which she could not have defined to herself, Iris determined not to gratify him.

"It is not necessary," she said quietly.

His face fell.

"Oh, thank you! I thought"—he laughed a short laugh—"I thought I had trapped you into telling me your name."

"I know," she said, her eyes looking beyond him, a smile curving her lips.

"Surely," he said, "I should know the name of my preserver! In the olden times a man would have added, 'to remember you in my prayers;' but I'm afraid my prayers wouldn't do anybody much good. Still I should like—will you tell me your name?"

Again the uncontrollable desire to keep it from him overcame her.

"It is not necessary," she said, and in her voice was the touch of the Knighton pride.

He was a gentleman most certainly. He bowed gravely.

"I beg your pardon. Of course it is not. I was about to tell you mine, but, as you say, it is not necessary. We met as strangers, we part as strangers; and if we meet again we meet as strangers still. Is not that your meaning?"

Singular words, and pregnant with a significance that would follow them through their lives, though they knew it not!

Iris colored. It was not her meaning, and she was following an impulse only, but pride—the Knighton pride—prevented her from saying so.

He had thrown himself on the bank almost at her feet, and he now turned on his elbow and looked at the view and towards the roof of the Revels, which shone through the trees in the setting sunlight.

"A beautiful place."

"You were never here before?" said Iris, battling with the curiosity which assailed her to know something more about him.

He hesitated.

"If I have been it was years ago, when I was a youngster. Knighton, it is called, is it not?"

"Knighton and Beverly. It is all one," she said.

"And which is the 'Revels'?" he asked.

Carefully suppressing every sign of interest from her face, Iris pointed with her whip to her father's house.

"Oh, that is it! It is a big place! The grandest in the county, I suppose?"

"I suppose it is," she replied carelessly.

He looked up at her curiously.

"Perhaps you know the people who live there—a Mr. Knighton and his daughter?"

Still more carefully she controled her face, so that it wore a blank, indifferent expression.

"Yes, that is, slightly."

"Ah!" he said thoughtfully. "What is he like?"

Iris raised her brows with an admirable simulation of indifference.

"What are most men like?" she said, flicking her habit.

"I see: you only know them very slightly," he said. "Are they friends of yours, may I ask?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I have few friends," she replied.

He looked at her downcast face attentively.

"I was going to ask you about them," he said. "I suppose I ought to know Mr. Knighton! But if I did, at any time, it was years ago, when I was a youngster, and I have quite forgotten him! The daughter —there is a daughter, I know."

"Oh, yes," carelessly, as if the subject had little interest for her.

"Do you know her? What is she like?"

Iris raised her eyes and looked at him.

"How do you mean?" she said.

And as she spoke the impulse to remain unknown, to confuse and mislead him became irresistible.

He laughed shortly.

"Well, I don't expect an exhaustive catalogue of her physical and mental gifts," he said. "But what is she like? Is she short or tall?"

"Short!" said Iris.

"I see you don't like her," he said.

"How can you see that?"

"By your tone," he answered. "You said 'short' as if it were a crime to be short! But pray go on!"

"Why are you so anxious to know about her?" she asked after a momentary pause.

He frowned slightly, then laughed again, but in a hesitating way.

"I am simply curious because I have known her father—or think I have—when I was a boy. So she is short?"

"Yes," said Iris, concealing most carefully the smile that longed to visit her lips. "Is a woman any the worse for being short?"

"All women are angels, short or tall," he said gravely.

A smile curved Iris's lips now.

"Am I to go on?" she said gravely.

"Please!" he said. "Would you describe her as good looking?"

She hesitated, and he laughed.

"Your hesitation is answer enough," he said. "Out of womanly charity you are reluctant to go on. Shall I answer for you?"

"If you like," she said.

"Well, then—but please remember that I base my mental picture upon your manner and reluctance!—Miss Knighton is short and plain!"

"I am afraid she is," said Iris.

He smiled triumphantly.

"With—shall we say red hair?"

"It certainly is not yellow," said Iris, keeping her face well under control.

"She has freckles,—freckles always go with that colored hair!—and, oh, she is altogether plain! Am I right?"

"You are as right as most people who guess are," she replied.

"And in addition to her plainness," he said carelessly, but still with a touch of curiosity in his voice, "she has—what shall I say?—a spice of temper?"

Iris paused, as if reluctant to make the admission; then she said:

"She is not the best-tempered girl I have met."

"I know," he said. "I have always heard that her father, Godfrey Knighton, was the proudest man in England—or out of it!—and I suppose she takes after him! Plain and proud. And—you are no friend of hers! I can understand that!—yes; I can understand that!"

"Is that a compliment?" said Iris, her grave eyes resting on his face.

He colored faintly, then laughed.

"No; it is truth. And the people here; do they like her?—is she popular?"

Iris hesitated a moment.

"She might be better liked," she said.

"I understand!" he said, shading his eyes and looking towards the Revels. "Treats the poor at her gates like dirt—just as her father is said to do. I wonder why Fate permits all the riches and clover in this world to some people and bestows all the poverty and weeds upon others! But perhaps I have been too hard on the poor girl ——"

"I think you have," said Iris, in a low, grave voice.

"Yes!" he said, with sudden contrition. "Because I have been brought up to dislike the father——" he stopped short and caught up his words. "Because a girl is unfortunate enough to be plain and ill-tempered she should not be hardly judged, but pitied! Poor girl! I pity her!"

"Poor girl! So do I!" said Iris.

He looked at her as she stood, the long dark lashes sweeping her cheeks and hiding her eyes, her lips closed in inviolable calm.

"I do not wonder that she is not a friend of yours," he said. "Such a girl would be wretched in your society."

Iris lifted her head.

"And why?"

"Why?"

He colored, and hung his head for a moment; then he raised his eyes and looked into hers.

"Because the contrast would be torture to her," he said.

He jumped up and arranged the reins for her, and held the stirrups.

She glided into the saddle—so graceful seemed her movements to the young man and sat there looking before her, with dreamy eyes.

"Good-day," she said suddenly, turning her glance upon him.

He bowed his bare head.

"Good-day—and good-bye and thank you! I shall not forget this place or the hour as long as I live. But for you I should not have been——" he stopped and looked up at her earnestly. "And I am not to know your name?"

She smiled slowly and thoughtfully.

"No," she said. "We met as strangers, we part as strangers, and if we meet again ——"

"That is not likely!" he said, and there was a touch of sadness in his deep, grave voice.

"—We shall meet as strangers still."

"At least," he said reverentially and eagerly, "you—you will let me shake hands?"

She slipped the gauntlet from her right hand, and he took it: took it and held it so near his lips that they almost touched it—but not quite. Then she drew it from him looked down into his handsome face and rode off.

He stood and gazed after her for a minute or two, then, avoiding the farm, he leaped the stile and gained the high road to Glossop.

Iris rode on for half a mile, perhaps, her head bent, her eyes fixed on Snow's neck.

Then, suddenly, she pulled up, sat motionless, thinking a moment, then turned her horse and galloped back to the brook. Then, stopping, she bent down from her saddle, and with the hooked end of her whip caught up a bright blue object.

It was the scarf which the young fellow had worn round his neck, and which he had taken off when he bathed his face in the stream.

She held it for a moment looking at it, then thrust it carefully out of sight in the bosom of her habit and rode away without stopping again, and with a dash of red in her face, towards Knighton Revels.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE GIRL WAS DIFFERENT.—A certain artist declares that a newly betrothed lover commissioned him to paint a secluded nook in the rocks on the shore, because there he had declared his passion.

The picture was painted, but before it was done the lover said to the artist:

"Of course I shall pay for that picture as agreed, but my engagement is off, and, it would be painfully suggestive to me. If you can sell it to somebody else I will take another picture, and be extremely obliged besides."

The painter assented to the arrangement, but within a week his patron again presented himself.

"It is all right," he announced joyously. "I'll take that picture."

"Am I to congratulate you on the renewal of your engagement?" asked the artist.

The other seemed confused, but quickly recovered his self-possession and grinned as he said:

"Well, not exactly. It was the same place, but the girl was different."

Bric-a-Brac.

THE MOON.—Does the moon affect lunatics? Modern science laughs at the idea, and draws the conclusion that the moon has no such influence. On the other side, it must be stated that the belief is thousands of years old, the supposition being that lunatics were better at the new moon, and worse at the full. The very word "lunatic" points to this, though it has been argued that the lunatics mentioned in the Bible were so named by the Eastern folks because they had a propensity for wandering over the flat roofs of the houses by moonlight.

SALT.—Several countries in old days adopted as a punishment deprivation of salt. One of the old laws of Holland ordained as the severest punishment that can be conceived, that certain malefactors should be fed on bread in which there was no salt. The effect, we learn, was horrible and painful in the extreme; and, of course, it was aggravated by the moist climate of the country. The wretched creatures sentenced to this penalty are said to have died the most horrible deaths, and medical men know that there is a tendency to disease in those who have an aversion, individual or inherited, to salt.

A GREAT LAND FOR DUCKS.—It is stated that there are more ducks in China than in all the world outside of it. They are kept on every farm, on the private roads, and on all the lakes, rivers and smaller streams. There are many boats on each of which as many as 2000 are kept. Their eggs constitute one of the most important articles of food. They are hatched in establishments fitted up for the purpose. Some of them turn out as many as 50,000 young ducks every year. Salted and smoked ducks are sold in all the towns, and many of them are exported to countries where Chinamen reside.

A CUTE SHOPKEEPER.—A shopkeeper of the capital of ancient Persia went one day to Ibraham, the governor of his province, to request the abatement of the taxes he was unable to pay. Hassam Ibrahim, a chief magistrate of the city, and the governor's brother, "You must pay or leave the city," said the governor. "Where shall I go?" asked the shopkeeper. "To Shiraz," was the reply. "Your nephew rules that city, and your family are my enemies," said the shopkeeper. "Then go to Cashan." "But your uncle is governor there." "Then complain to Shah." "He is your elder brother and prime minister." "Then go to the lower regions!" exclaimed the governor, in a passion. "Alas, your pious father is dead," retorted the shopkeeper.

THE GLASS.—A foolish omen, and one that has been told over and over again with the utmost solemnity, is that if a person breaks a looking-glass, inadvertently or purposely, he or she will have no luck for a space of seven years. Many a one affirms most positively that, following a broken looking-glass, domestic trouble had never ceased for seven years. It is related that, when the Emperor Napoleon, was engaged in one of his campaigns in Italy, he broke the glass over a portrait of Josephine. This accident so disconcerted him that he soon dispatched a courier to convince himself of her safety, being fully impressed of her death. In parts of England the belief is strong that the breakage of a looking-glass or the glass over a picture is the sure precursor of a death in the family.

SOLOMON DEAD.—There is a legend concerning the death of Solomon, which is to the following effect:—Solomon employed the genii in building the temple, but perceiving that his end was at hand prayed God that his death might be concealed from the genii until the work was completed. For Solomon knew that if he died, and the genii knew of his death, they would leave off building. He made himself a staff from a tree in his garden, and leaning upon this with his head bowed in adoration, he died in the temple. His soul was taken away so gently that the body remained standing for one year, those who saw him thought he was absorbed in prayer, and they dared not approach. All the time the temple was being finished, a little white ant had been gnawing at the staff, and a year after Solomon's death, the staff crumbled under the weight of Solomon, and the body fell to the ground.

A CONTRAST.

BY SUSIE M. BEST.

Love maketh glad—a little space—
It rapture brings
Upon its wings,
That shed on life a wondrous grace,
And hide its stings!

Love maketh happy—for an hour—
All care and fret
It doth forget,
Like some Egyptian lotus-flower,
It lulls regret!

Love maketh sad—for endless years—
Its ruthless hand
Destroys dreamland,
Its cities drowns in storms of tears—
Leaves barren strand!

Love maketh wise—so sadly wise—
It teaches one
To look upon
Hope's joyful promises as lies—
With meaning none!

A GOLDEN PRIZE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "BY CROOKED PATHS," "SHEATHED IN VELVET," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SWINBURNE, in one of his most exquisite poems, remarks that when the gods desire to be cruel, they torture the heart by straining it on the rack of despair.

Clifford's heart was now strained on that rack.

Despair! Think of it! Most ills that man is heir to can be remedied, or, at least, alleviated. But what could undo this evil work of Fate?

Kate married, married! Yesterday, this morning, before the service, five minutes before the service he might have been in time.

He might have had himself carried into the church, if need were, and forbidden the ceremony. But now it was all too late; too late for anything! Too late! She was married, and lost to him for ever, and ever, and ever!

I must confess that I marvel he did not go raving mad there and then; that he did not attempt to take his life! For, think of it!

To find oneself the rightful claimant to an earldom, and to discover that the usurper had married the girl you loved! Imagination may picture his state of mind, may call up some idea of his agony and anguish, but no pen can do aught but mock it.

Half-an-hour passed. Nellie and her father stood outside, the latter too terrified to take any active steps, the former with her white face wet with tears.

Some dim inkling of the truth was stealing upon her, but she said nothing. It was the old man who spoke first.

"Shall we—hadn't we better break open the door, Nell?" he faltered, anxiously. "Lord only knows what he'll do to himself! A man in his condition ain't answerable, you see."

But she shook her head.

"Wait, father," she said, listlessly, clinging to him.

An hour passed, and then they heard the bolt drawn back slowly, and Clifford Raven stood on the threshold.

His face was white and drawn, terribly drawn, but it was quite calm. He came quickly towards them, and held out his hand.

"I have come to ask you to forgive me my friends," he said, and his voice sounded dry and thin, like that of an old man. "I—I have had a great trial. I scarcely know what I said, but whatever it was, forgive me. Forgive me for every harsh, ungrateful word. Nellie, I shall not plead to you in vain, I know," and he held out his hand to her.

She took it in both of hers, and looked up kindly into his face, and then away from him.

"There, there," said Mr. Wood soothingly. "Never mind all that, lad. We've nothing to forgive. If there's aught the matter, and we can do anything, Neil or me, why you know——"

"Yes, I do know," he said gravely and earnestly, "and there is something you can do!"

The old man nodded eagerly.

"You can forget every word I have said. Yes, every word," he repeated solemnly. "Put them down to the wanderings of a sick man, and forget them. I don't ask you not to repeat them, for that I know, in any case, you would not do; but I ask you to forget them, and so help me to forget them. I am—and shall still be the same man you have always known—just Clifford Raven—the manager of Wood's quarry, that is if the proprietor will let me still be so——"

"Aye, aye, my lad," said the old man softly.

—"And as for the rest," continued Clifford, "why we'll consider it just a dream," and he drew a long breath, as a spasm of pain crossed his face—"just a dream and nothing more. A dream from which I have fully wakened. Don't be anxious," he added quickly, as he looked at their care-lined faces, "I am all right, to-morrow, please Heaven, I shall be well and strong enough to get to work—to work!" and he drew himself up. "That is the best medicine for a disease like mine! Good-bye, and thank you—thank you, dear Nellie!" and pressing her hand he went in again and the door closed upon him.

* * * * *

Married and on her honeymoon! Kate was not a bad-hearted girl, and as she sat in the railway car—a specially ordered drawing-room car—in the train that was whirling her and her husband to London, she fought hard against the fearful misery that seemed weighing upon her heart, and harder still to realize her position and efface the memory from her heart of the one man in the whole world who had touched it.

She was married to Arthur Lord Carr-Lyon, she was his lawful wife, and, Heaven helping her, she would try and do her duty by him, try and fulfil the marriage vows which she had sworn before her cousin the bishop that morning.

She did not love him—yet, but she would try to.

Meanwhile, she would do all she could to please him, would hide from him the aching void in her heart, and try and be a good wife.

Fortunately for her, her lord and husband seemed as little inclined for conversation as she did, for if he had begun to bother her with attentions it is as likely as not that she would have broken down and that a scene would have resulted.

But Lord Carr-Lyon seemed moody and depressed, absent-minded and preoccupied: and, though he made a remark now and again, he sat for the most part behind a newspaper which, strange to say, he never turned over.

Now and again he got out and got some refreshment at the large stations, and for some hours left her alone while he got a cigar—many cigars—in the smoking compartment.

It was supposed to be the happiest day in his life, but I don't think he had spent a more miserable one.

He had obtained the dearest wish of his heart.

Kate Meddon was his wife, but he could not forget for one instant the white face of the man lying in the quarry cottage, the man whom he had recognized as Desmond Carr-Lyon, the rightful owner of the title he, Arthur, bore.

The train reached London at last, and he came to the car-door.

"We're here," he said, in a low voice. "Are you tired?" and he raised his eyes to her white, weary face; "the train's beastly late, and it's a long journey."

"I am a little tired!" she said, as piteously as she could. "Have we far to go? I know little or nothing of London?"

"No, it's not very far to Park Lane," he said.

He led her to the car-way, a couple of footmen, who had hurried up, following with the costly furs and trifles with which the car had seemed half loaded, and she saw a splendidly-appointed carriage waiting, with a wigged coachman on the box.

It would have filled the major with joy, but it brought not a spark of consolation to poor Kate!

And yet how happy she would have been if she could have been walking to a hansom cab, leaning on the arm of Clifford Raven!

The people on the platform looked at them as they passed, attracted as much by her beauty as the powdered footmen.

"What a lovely girl!" said one. "Bride and bridegroom; how pale she is!"

They got into the carriage, and Lord Carr-Lyon attentively arranged the furs round her.

"We shall soon be home," he said; "then you can rest. There will be time before dinner."

"I am not so tired as all that—Arthur," she said.

It was the first time she had ever called him by his Christian name, and one time, not long ago, his heart would have thrilled at the sound of it on her lips, but his face did not lighten or grow brighter.

The carriage sped swiftly through the London streets, and pulled up at the house in Park Lane.

It was not very large, but it was completely and artistically appointed, even for these super-luxurious times, and Kate tried to appreciate it as she looked round the small hall, with its costly mosaics and splendid hangings.

"What a beautiful house it seems," she said.

"Yes," he said; "it's not bad! It's a hole though, compared to some of them. You'll find your rooms pretty decent! Better go and rest! We'll have dinner when you like!"

Her maid stood quietly and respectfully eager to welcome her, and led the way to her rooms.

There were three, en suite, all beautifully decorated and appointed, bed-room, and dressing-room, and a boudoir, in china-blue and gold.

There was a piano in the boudoir, and pictures in all the rooms—watercolors and cabinets—exotics, statuettes; all the things which the world considers as necessaries rather than luxuries.

Kate looked round with a dazed feeling. Was she asleep and dreaming? Was she really a countess, and all these things her own—her very own?

She tried to get up some enthusiasm of ownership, but failed.

"I am tired, that's what it is," she said, and she threw herself upon the soft couch.

"The butler wishes to know at what hour your ladyship will dine," said the maid, as she drew a silken coverlet over her.

Kate started. Even yet she had scarcely got used to the title.

"I do not care: in an hour, perhaps! Any time Lord Carr-Lyon wishes."

"His lordship wished the butler to consult you, my lady."

"In an hour then," said Kate.

She lay still for half-an-hour; not sleeping, for that was impossible, but spending the minutes in attempting to realize her position, in strengthening the resolution she had made to do her duty.

Then she got up, and the maid, who had been unpacking some of the imperials in the next room, came in and assisted her to dress.

"Your ladyship will wear a plain evening dress to-night?" she said.

"I have nothing but plain ones," said Kate with half a smile. "You will find one of black lace——"

"Yes, my lady; I have got it ready," said the maid promptly. "I thought it would be the one your ladyship would choose."

The girl, who was about the same age as Kate, was a capable and intelligent maid, and something over and above that, and Kate's beauty and gentleness had already won her heart.

"I hope I shall not give you up too much trouble," said Kate, as she sat down before the glass and the girl unfastened the thick coils and let her hair fall like a silken cascade over the snowy wrapper. "I have not been used to a regular maid, though one of my father's servants at home was kind enough to wait upon me on occasions."

The girl, whose name was Marie, went out to her more and more at this simple appeal.

"I shall not think of trouble, my lady; and I am sure you will not give me any; it will be a pleasure to serve you. Your ladyship has lovely hair!"

Kate smiled and glanced absently in the glass.

"For that matter, it is no nicer than your own, I daresay," she said simply.

The girl, who had been accustomed to have her little flatteries received by her former mistresses in haughty self-complacence, colored with amazement.

"Will you wear any jewelry—and what, my lady?" she asked presently.

Kate was about to answer, "None," when it suddenly occurred to her that her husband would be pleased if she wore some of his presents, so she said:

"There is a pearl and ruby set I will wear, please."

Marie arranged the suite with careful attention, and stepped back to take inspection.

"Your ladyship is dressed," she said, and added to herself, "and if there is a more lovely young creature—bride or no bride—in London, then I should like to see her!"

A footman came to the door a few minutes later and announced that dinner was ready, and Kate went down, Marie following and arranging her train in the hall, the two gigantic footmen standing like gorgeous statues on either side of the door.

Kate entered the drawing-room, and was surprised to find it empty. She walked round it for a few minutes, looking at the decorations and ornaments.

There were costly pictures on the walls, rare ornaments, and artistic furniture: it was, in short, a drawing-room of the present day, furnished by an upholsterer who had received carte blanche.

The minutes passed, and still she remained alone.

A footman came in with some coals, and she thought she would ask him if Lord Carr-Lyon knew dinner was waiting.

"His lordship is not in yet, my lady; his lordship went out half-an-hour ago—to his club, he said, my lady."

Kate wondered a little, but a few minutes later the door opened, and Lord Carr-Lyon entered.

He was in evening dress, but much less over dressed than usual, and his hair was disarranged, and his face flushed.

"Sorry you've had to wait," he muttered. "I just went down to the club—it's just round the corner—to get my letters."

He offered her his arm, and they went into the dining-room.

The dinner was an elaborate one, and admirably cooked, the servants perfect in their noiseless and rapt attention, Kate, with her good resolution strong upon her, made an effort at cheerful conversation.

"Did you find many old friends at the club?" she asked.

He looked up with a little start, as if he had been lost in thought.

"No," he said, in a low voice, that sounded harsh and strained. "It's not the time of year: London's beastly just now."

Kate wondered why he had chosen to come to London if that were so, but she said:

"I always picture London as bright and gay at any time, but that's because I know so little about it, I daresay."

"I daresay," he muttered, with his eyes bent on his plate.

Kate made one or two more efforts as unsuccessfully, then relapsed into silence, wondering what could be the meaning of his changed manner.

Ever since the ceremony she suddenly remembered he had been moody and preoccupied; and his manner had become almost sullen. Was he ill, or had he heard bad news?

And this was her wedding night!

The dinner glided on in its noiseless way. Kate ate very little, and Lord Carr-Lyon paid more attention to his glass than his plate: the butler seemed always serving him with champagne.

But all things come to an end if one can but wait long enough, and presently the dessert made its appearance, and the footmen left the room.

The two—bride and bridegroom—sat in silence for a minute or so; then Kate, forcing herself to speak, said:

"Are you very tired?"

He looked up sharply.

"No! Why should I be?"

"I—I did not know," said Kate; "I thought you looked tired or ill, or as if you had heard bad news."

He looked up again more sharply than before, and eyed her suspiciously.

"What do you mean by bad news?" he said sullenly, with a kind of smothered ferocity, and the face that had grown flushed with the wine turned pale for a moment.

"I do not know—I meant nothing," said Kate coldly; "nothing but what I said. You seemed thoughtful——"

"I am thoughtful. I've got something to be thoughtful about," he broke in slowly, and as if he were keeping a guard upon his words. "I suppose a man ought to be gay and jolly on his wedding-day, oughtn't he?"

Kate remained silent. Her heart seemed freezing, and she had to repeat to herself, "He is my husband—my husband—my husband!" to prevent herself from rising and leaving the room.

"A man's wedding day is supposed to be the happiest in a man's life, isn't it?" he said, with a half-concealed sneer. "At least, that's the popular idea."

Kate remained silent.

"I suppose you're happy enough?" he said, after a pause. "You've got all you wanted. You're the wife of an earl—you're a countess—and one of the richest women in England——"

Kate looked up white and startled. What had come to him? Had he gone mad? Could this be the man who had always shrunk nervously in her presence, and almost crawled at her feet?

She glanced unconsciously at his wine-glass with a sudden half vague horror.

He noticed her pallor and the apprehensive glance, and he filled his glass again.

"I say I suppose you are happy and contented, aren't you?"

Kate forced herself to answer him: it would be better, perhaps.

"I don't know why you speak to me in this way," she said quietly. "What have I done to offend you?"

"What have you done?" he retorted. "What should you have done? I simply asked you a question. Most girls in your position would be contented, I should think. To step from nothing into a countess with horses and carriages, and more money than you can spend——"

Kate rose, then she sank into her chair again.

"You cannot know what you are saying," she said in a low voice; she tried hard to keep calm and firm. "You cannot wish to insult me——"

He remained silent for a moment or two, then he got up.

"I don't want to insult you," he said. "Look here, I'm going down to the club for half-an-hour. Wait up till I come back. I want to speak to you."

The fact was he had not sufficiently screwed his courage up to the starting point for the scene he had been gloating over all the day long; he must have yet more drink, and he was ashamed to get it in her presence.

The beautiful face, the queenly form opposite cowed and quelled him. After another bottle of champagne he should be fit to talk to her.

Kate made no attempt to stop him, and he left the room; she heard him go into the hall and the street door close after him.

She sat motionless as a statue for half-an-hour, her brain whirling, her senses confusedly striving to realize the situation.

It was her wedding night, and her husband had behaved like a madman, and left her without rhyme or reason.

And yet, had he no reason? Had he learnt when too late that she had been simply bought and sold, that she disliked and distrusted him all through, and that her father had forced her into this marriage?

She leant her head upon her hand, and sat bowed over the table with a heavy, aching heart.

An hour passed, and she rose at last and went into the drawing-room. How long she sat there, looking into the slowly dying embers of the fire, she never knew; but the house had long been quiet when she heard his step in the hall.

He came in, his hat in his hand, his light overcoat still on, and stood in the centre of the room looking at her.

He had had the other bottle of champagne, but he was still sober enough to understand and execute his purpose.

"Oh, you are here still?" he said.

"You wished me to wait for you," she said. "You had something to say to me."

Her voice sounded strange in her ears, as if it belonged to some other person, and not to her, Kate Meddon.

"Yes, I had," he retorted, with sullen and suppressed fury. "You and I have got to have an understanding to-night!"

Kate made no response, but she fixed her large eyes upon him in proud patience.

He flung his hat on to a chair, and leant against the mantel-shelf, his hands thrust into his pockets, his face—flushed and pale by turns—turned towards her, his eyes looking at her with jealous anger and suspicion, and yet with a reluctant senile admiration.

Never, since he had first seen her, had she looked so lovely, more to be desired, than she looked to-night to the wretched

man who owned her, and was about to fling her away from him.

"I suppose you have been laughing in your sleeve all the time," he said. "I suppose you have been flattering yourself upon having succeeded in making a perfect fool of me, haven't you?" he demanded. "Oh! I know you. You can't deceive me! You look like a—a saint, as if earth wasn't good enough for you, or a king wasn't fit for you. But wait a bit. I'm not such a fool as you take me for—you or that father of yours! I'll show you presently that you haven't got all the laugh on your side, either of you."

"I do not understand," Kate said, in a low, clear voice.

"You don't, but you will. Come, answer me a plain question. Did you or did you not marry me for my money and title?"

A deep crimson stained her face, and for a second her eyes fell. Was it not the truth—this he had said in a question?

"Can't you answer?" he demanded with a sneer. "You won't tell a lie, I suppose? Did you or did you not marry me for my money and title?"

"I will not answer you," she said with an effort.

He laughed hoarsely.

"No, you can't, unless you answer 'yes.' I'll answer for you. You did marry me for my money and my title; you, or rather your father, wanted you to be the Countess of Carr-Lyon, and he, if you did not, wanted some of the money. That's why you married me. You can't deny it."

"I will not answer you," she said again as before.

He glowered down at her.

"But it's true, and you know it, or if you don't I can make it plain to you. Do you know how much I am to give your father for you? Do you know, eh, or shall I tell you?"

Her face whitened, and she put her hand to her forehead with a dull sense of being overwhelmed.

"How much?" she said vaguely, indistinctly.

"Yes, how much?" he repeated, with brutal emphasis. "What was the price I was to pay in hard cash? If you don't know I'll tell you. It was first ten, and then fifteen thousand pounds."

"Ten, fifteen——" she murmured.

—"Thousand pounds I was to pay your father," he said slowly and distinctly. "That's the amount. A good price even for such a treasure as you," and he sneered. "Do you think I'm telling you a lie?"

She had thought so, but at the question she raised her eyes and looked at him, and saw—Heaven knows how!—that he was speaking the truth.

She hid her face for a few moments, and something seemed to shoot through her heart.

All along she had known that her marriage would save her father, but that she should have been bought and sold in this shameless manner, that an actual sum should have been agreed upon was too horrible!

The blood seemed to burn hot as fire in her cheeks as she hid them in her hands.

He laughed, and his eyes grew red with fiendish delight. She had scorned him; she had treated him with cool indifference and dislike.

It was his turn now, and his innings were only just commencing, too. "My proud beauty, I'll have you at my feet presently!" he said.

"You believe me," he said, aloud. "You had better, for it's time! That is the amount, but it isn't paid yet."

And he chuckled.

"You are my wife, but your father hasn't got my money yet. Whether he ever will or no depends upon you."

She sat motionless and silent. She did not ask him what he meant; it is a question whether she heard him.

"Do you hear what I say?" he demanded. "You'd better pay attention; I'm not talking at random, and I know what I'm talking about. It depends upon you. You're my wife, you know, and husband and wife are one—so they say. You shall decide whether I pay him or no,—whether I can pay him."

There was silence for a moment or two. He took out his cigar-case and lighted a cigar, and smoked it with a deliberate air.

It was an insult, this smoking, unasked, in her presence, and she felt it, as he intended that she should feel it, just as a man in his death throes might feel the sting of a gnat.

"And now are you happy? You are a countess, the wife of a great man, and you can put fifteen thousand pounds—if you like—in your father's pocket! You ought to be happy!"

She did not speak.

"But I have not done with you yet! I've got another question to ask you! Please pay attention. Do you know a man called Clifford Raven?"

Kate did not start, or spring to her feet, but her hands dropped from her face, and she looked at him with a dull, vague questioning.

The sound of the name had gone through her heart like an arrow. It had called up the vision of the man she loved, and he stood before her, compared with this brute in human form, as an angel of goodness.

"Come," he said; "pull yourself together, and answer my question; I made myself plain enough. Do you know a man called Clifford Raven?"

She waited a moment, then she rose; and it was like the rising of a statue tortured into life.

"Why do you ask?—why do you insult me?" she said, her hand pressed against her heart.

"Insult you?" he repeated, with a sneer. "Is it an insult to ask you if you know a man? Wait till you are insulted, if you please. Come, drop that theatrical business, and answer my question. I've got a right to ask it. I'm your husband, you know. Do you know Clifford Raven? Wait," and he held up his finger, "just think a moment if you're going to"—"tell a lie," he was going to say, but even to him at that moment of blind, brutal passion such a speech seemed ridiculous addressed to that queenly form. "Just think and consider a moment if you mean to try and hoodwink me, for I tell you straight and beforehand that I've got the whole thing clear, and that you can't deceive me. Now, then, do you know a man called Clifford Raven?"

"I do!" she said, her bosom heaving, her eyes flashing under their long lids.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I DO know Clifford Raven," said Kate, meeting the gaze of his bloodshot eyes with steady firmness, and resolving, even as she spoke, that she would tell the whole truth; let him rage and bully—strike her, even; she would tell him the whole truth.

"Oh, you do!" he said in a tone of malignant triumph; "and what do you know of him?"

"What do I know of him?" she repeated, not to gain time, as he suspected, but that she might think where to begin.

"Yes, what do you know of him?" he repeated. "How is it you never mentioned his name to me,—never talked about him?"

"Why should I talk about him?" she began; then she flushed.

She knew why she had never spoken of Clifford Raven, because he was too often in her heart to be upon her lips.

"I did not wish to speak of him," she said. "Wait!" she added, for he opened his lips as if about to retort savagely. "I will tell you everything——"

"You had better!" he growled.

"I will conceal nothing. I saw Clifford Raven a few months ago. I met him in a lane first; afterwards he came to my father's house—"

Arthur Carr-Lyon started; even yet he did not know what part the major had been playing and was still playing. He listened with breathless suspense and curiosity.

"I saw him then for a few minutes. I met him on the cliff the next morning again, for a few minutes; and,"—she hesitated, and a sudden flush rose to her white face—"I saw him again the night of the ball at Lydcote."

"And is that all?" he demanded.

"Those are the only occasions I have seen him," she said.

"And you expect me to believe you?" he said with a sneer.

Her eyes flashed, and she seemed to grow taller and tower above him.

"Lord Carr-Lyon——"

"Oh, that'll do," he said mockingly. "We won't have any high-faluting; it's too serious for that. And that is all you know about him, is it? Do you mean to tell me that you are not in love with that fellow—with the man you've only met three times?"

The scarlet shone in her face, then left it pale again.

"I will not answer a question meant to be an insult," she said. "I am your wife——"

"You are," he assented, with brutal emphasis. "You can save yourself the trouble of answering; look at that," and he took the half sheet of dirty note-paper which he had picked up on the terrace, and tossed it across to her.

She hesitated a moment, then stooped and picked it up.

For a few seconds the lines seemed to bear no meaning for her; then, as it broke upon her she trembled, flushed, and stood with the dirty paper crushed in her hand.

"Well?" he said. "Is it true what that paper says?" and he fixed his eyes fiercely on her. "Has this Clifford Raven ever made love to you?"

"He has," she replied, and the words were scarcely audible.

His hands clenched, and he seemed almost as if he were about to start forward and strike her; but there was something so full of dignity in her tall, upright figure, in the lovely, downcast face, that his hands opened and fell at his side powerless.

"You—you are a pretty young lady," he said between his teeth. "And they all think you the embodiment of—of purity and all that. By Heaven, you are a bad lot!"

She slowly raised her head and looked at him, a steady glance of scorn and contempt.

"You let him make love to you—then? Before you had promised to be my wife, or after—which?"

"After," she said steadily.

He laughed with mad, impotent rage.

"You did! You let this fellow you'd only met three times—as you tell me!—make love to you, knowing that you had promised to marry me! And you can stand there and tell me!"

"I said that I would tell you the truth; I will do so," she said, in a very low stern voice.

"You'd better," he retorted, significantly. "You'll gain nothing by keeping anything back. I know much more than you think, my—my pure-minded, innocent girl!"

And he laughed with an evil sneer.

"And you cared for this man?" he asked with sudden pallor.

Her eyes did not flinch, but she did not answer for a few moments; then she sternly said:

"That is a question you have no right to ask, Lord Carr-Lyon. You may forget that I am your wife—I cannot."

"You have answered," he said, with suppressed fury. "You have told me quite enough. You let this man make love to you, and—and loved him"—he clenched his teeth—"all the while you were engaged to me? Why didn't you throw me over, and go to him?"

The bitterness of death seemed to pass across Kate's spirit.

Why had she not done so? Why had she not broken off her hateful engagement, even if she still mistrusted Clifford, whom she had seen, five minutes after he had left her, wiping the eyes of another girl?

She would have been free, at any rate—free from this hateful bondage which was worse than African slavery!

"You don't answer," he said. "I'll tell you; because it was too good a thing to throw up; because you had set your mind upon being a countess, and marrying well, and I was too good a match to let slip; that's why. And you've done it, haven't you? You thought I should never know anything about it, didn't you?—that you'd be able to fool me to the end of time? But you were mistaken, you see. It is you who have been fooled—you and your old scoundrel of a father."

And he laughed with malignant triumph.

Kate quivered in every limb under the taunt.

"I had no wish to deceive you, Lord Carr-Lyon," she said. "I told you when you asked me to be your wife that I did not love you—I have never expressed any affection for you. You have said more than once that you had bought me—" the tears were near her eyes but they did not fall—"but even though I suspected it I meant to do my duty. To-day—" her voice quivered—"I had resolved I would do my best to make you happy, that I would keep the vow I made at God's altar—" she stopped, breathless and speechless.

He looked at her with fierce incredulity.

"And you think that I shall believe it, that you can impose upon me with that twaddle, do you, after deceiving me as you have done? You must be a greater fool than ever you thought me. But wait, I haven't done with you yet. Who is this Clifford Raven, the man you are in love with, Lady Carr-Lyon?"

"I do not know," she said. "He was a friend of my father's——"

He started slightly.

—"I know nothing more."

"And you loved a man you knew nothing about, eh? Well, I'll tell you who he is," he said, drawing a long breath. "I'll tell you who this man is you've thrown over to marry me for. His name isn't Clifford Raven at all."

He spoke slowly as if he were endeavoring to prolong the torture he had prepared for her; and she looked up heavily, and without curiosity.

"It is a false name, and is no more his than mine is; not so much," he said, with a little laugh, "for his name happens to be Carr-Lyon!"

Kate pushed the hair from her forehead with a weary gesture. The scene, the excitement were telling upon her after the long and trying ordeal of the day, and she longed for rest and peace, for a climax of some sort, let it be what it might.

What did it matter to her whether Clifford Raven was living under an assumed name or not?

"Do you hear?" he said. "His name is Carr-Lyon—Desmond Carr-Lyon—and he is my cousin."

She did allow a faint expression of surprise to creep into her weary eyes.

"Your cousin?"

"Yes, my cousin. I have not seen him for years. He disappeared. No one has seen him, except your father, and he saw him die, and helped to bury him."

"Die! Helped to bury him!" she repeated dully.

He nodded, biting his lip and watching her keenly for the moment when he should strike the blow and crush her, even though in doing so he should bring about his own ruin.

"Yes; there can be no mistake about that because your father swore to it. Swore before a magistrate that he had seen Desmond Carr-Lyon die and had helped to bury him with his own hand!"

She put her hand to her brow.

"What of this?" she said with weary bewilderment. "Why do you tell me this?"

"Because I am going to tell you who Clifford Raven is; because I am going to prove that it is you who are fooled not I, clever as you think yourself. Do you know why your father perjured himself?"

She shook her head and sank on to the couch.

He drew a little nearer and bent down, glancing as he did so towards the door and round the room as if he feared the very walls might have ears.

"Because Desmond Carr-Lyon, my cousin, is older than I am and stands between me and the earldom!"

She did not understand even then, but looked up at him dully.

"Don't you take it?" he demanded hoarsely. "Wake up and realize it. I tell you that Desmond Carr-Lyon stood between me and the title; that he stands so still; that he *is* the Earl of Carr-Lyon!"

She clutched the arm of the couch, and her eyes grew wider.

"Now you understand!" he exclaimed gloatingly. "You realize it now! This man, Clifford Raven, whom you threw over for me, is the real Earl of Carr-Lyon, and I—the man you have been clever enough to marry!—your husband, am a mere nobody; as poor as a church mouse, and up to my neck in debt! Now, who is the fool, Miss Kate—me, or you and your clever father?" and he laughed sardonically.

Kate rose, pressing her hand to her bosom.

The loss of the title never for a moment troubled her; it was not that which seemed choking her, but the villainy of this man and her father, who had conspired to rob another man of his birth-right.

Arthur Carr-Lyon watched her, his teeth set, his eyes glowing malignantly.

"You don't disbelieve me?" he said. "You'd better not. It's the truth. I am no more the Earl of Carr-Lyon than one of the footmen here, and you are no more the countess than the cook or the housemaid," and he laughed.

"Oh, it is horrible, horrible!" she breathed at last, falling back and hiding her face from him.

He laughed again; it was almost worth being ruined to be able to triumph over her.

"Yes, I should think you were rather cut up," he said, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking down at her with keen, lingering enjoyment. "It is rather a sell, isn't it, to find that you have married the wrong man; that if you'd only acted square and straight and stuck to the man you fancied, you'd have been in reality the Countess of Carr-Lyon; whereas, you are merely Mrs. Arthur of that family. Rather a difference you'll find it," and he sneered. "I'm as poor as a church mouse, as I said; I'm in debt, and if I'd got any money of my own I'd have to pay Desmond for all the money I've spent while I've had the title. His money, his title!"

She did not speak. She was slowly, realizing it all, though dark and insoluble as yet seemed the reason, on her father's part, for such villainy.

"But though that's bad enough," he went on, with brutal distinctness; "I am not in such a complete mess as your father."

She looked up suddenly, fearfully, and he laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"Perjury like that of which the old man has been guilty is rather awkward, and they give it to them pretty hot for it! Seven or fourteen years' penal servitude, at the least, I should say."

She beat forward, breathing heavily.

"Perhaps they'll make it seven years, on account of his age! He'll say he made a mistake, of course, but they won't listen to that, because, as you say, he saw Clifford Raven a few months ago, and, of course, must have known we were keeping him out of the title. Yes, they'll give him seven years, as sure as fate!" and he laughed.

Kate pushed the hair from her face, and stood up, leaning against the mantel-shelf for support.

"Are you man, or a devil?" she now panted.

"I was a man, and not a very bad sort, till I met your father, and fell in love with you," he retorted, with an ugly smile. "But such women as you make devils of such men as me, when you play us false! And now what are you going to do?"

"What—am I going to do?" she gasped hoarsely.

He nodded with an affection of indifference.

"Yes, what are you going to do? You know the whole truth now; you know that this lover of yours, the man you should have married, is the real earl; are you going to tell him so? Perhaps he knows already?" and he looked at her enquiringly. "But no; I suppose he doesn't, or he would have been down on us, wouldn't he?"

She stared at him. Her face went from white to red, and back to white again.

"Look here," he said; "I don't bear malice, and now I've shown you that you haven't married such a fool as you suppose, I don't mind helping you and your father out of this mess! You understand the mess he is in, I suppose? You quite comprehend that they will send him to penal servitude? It's just as well not to mince matters, you know. Well, are you listening?" for she stood so white, so statuesque, that she seemed almost lifeless. "Well, the matter, it seems to me, rests with you!"

"With me?" her lips formed the words rather than spoke.

"Yes, with you," he repeated, his eyes falling for a moment under her fixed regard. "If Desmond doesn't know the truth, he soon will, and he will be down on us. We could fight him—I'd fight him to to the last breath—but there's a better way than that. If he's so sweet on you, he'd listen to you perhaps——"

Her eyes grew more distended, her breath came fast.

—"In fact, you'd better see if you can't get the right side of him. A woman like you, with your looks, can do anything with a man that's fond of her. I shan't be particular."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

IT is said that in eight cases out of ten if a man gets $50,000 all of a sudden he will either go cracked in the head or make a laughing stock of himself. That's doubtless the reason why Providence keeps $50,000 away from so many of us.

WHATEVER things injure your eye you are anxious to remove; but things which affect your mind you defer.

ALL WE SHALL KNOW.

BY WM. W. LONG.

Sing to me, dear—it thrills my soul,
Sing minor music soft and low,
Sad as great, lonely, desolate love,
Crowned with sharp-tipped thorns of woe.

Sing to the Future's dark and lonely hours,
A deathless love and deathless pain;
Let all the joyous notes to silence die,
Into a mournful, sad refrain.

Sing soft the elegy of Love,
For all the night is filled with woe;
Soon Memory will cover up Love's face,
And misery then is all that we shall know.

ONLY A VIOLET.

BY D. G. H.

CHAPTER VII.

BUT Keith found the decision difficult. He was quite as willing to marry Sybil as to marry anyone else, but he had no particular wish for matrimony at all. Still he could not go on living his dreary, aimless life.

A wedding with his cousin would give him wealth in the present and vast riches in the future; the home of his childhood would be his inheritance.

He would go into Parliament, and win a name and fame.

He went to Ogilvie about a week after the family had returned there, and his very coming told his mother and the Earl of his intentions.

He was given every opportunity of holding tete-a-tete with his cousin, and yet he found the momentous question very difficult to put.

It came at last—the opportunity dreaded and yet desired; and truly no two scenes could have been more different than that of his proposal to Molly and this of his wooing Miss Hurst.

It was summer instead of winter. A dainty boudoir instead of the snow-covered woods; and instead of a little girl in tears the heroine was a stately beauty in smiles and velvet.

Sybil Hurst had a face an artist or sculptor would have raved over.

It was faultless in every detail—the features perfect in their regularity, the coloring bright enough to relieve the excessive paleness of the flaxen hair.

Some people said her eyes were cold and her mouth hard, but then those same features were praised by others as calm and firm. So, no doubt, the first criticism was only used by detractors, and what heiress was without enemies?

"To-morrow will be the twelfth of August," remarked Miss Hurst, unconsciously, precipitating her own fate. "Aren't you going north Keith, for the shooting?"

"I don't think so!"

"I thought you had quite recovered from the effects of that accident?"

"I believe I have; but there are other things than shooting to fill a man's mind."

"You never seemed to think of anything else?"

"I may be growing wiser. I am getting quite elderly, Sybil. Fancy, I was twenty-seven yesterday!"

"I wish you had told me it was your birthday; I would have given you a nice present!"

"Suppose you give me one now? Sybil, do you think you could trust your future to me. I am a plain, blunt man, and I can't make love, as they call it in books; but you have known me all your life, and if you will trust me, Sybil, I will do my best to make you happy."

Sybil Hurst hesitated. She did not love Keith, but she admired him extremely. Also she was, in her quiet way, extremely obstinate.

Very possibly Miss Hurst might utter the word "obey" at the altar, but in practice she meant to wipe it out of the marriage vows.

Freedom from all control was what she desired, and surely she would gain this more easily from a man who owed fortune and estates to herself than from a richer suitor.

Besides, Keith seemed to favor independence, and there was no touch of jealousy in his nature.

"I think we should get on very well together," said the beauty, slowly. "I am not romantic or that sort of thing, Keith, but I have always liked you!"

"And you will be my wife?"

"Yes," she returned, quietly. "I think we are very well suited. Neither of us are romantic or sentimental, so we shall get on very well together!"

"Admirably, I trust," said Keith. Then there was a moment's hesitation. He felt he ought to kiss her. It was the correct thing under the circumstances, and yet

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Perhaps the entrance of Lady Alice, who came in just then quite unexpectedly, was a greater relief to her son than she imagined, when he drew Sybil towards her and said, cheerfully:

"You will soon have a daughter of your own, mother, for Sybil and I have agreed to go through life together!"

* * * * * *

Despite the sorrow at her heart, despite the memory of Keith's cruel letter, Molly Lester was happy at Woodside.

She often thought if only she had come there a few months earlier, before meeting Mr. Durant.

If only she had gone to Lady Bruce's, with no experience of life beyond that gained at her uncle's, she should have been perfectly radiant with joy. As it was, there was a wistful note even in her content.

She was happy because every one loved her, but there were memories in the past she could never forget, and which gave her a quiet dignity in spite of her youth.

Lady Bruce loved her dearly. It may have been her remembrance of Molly's mother, and the romance which hung over her fate, which first made Evelyn take a fancy to her children's governess, but in the end she loved her for herself alone; and when, in July, Lord Bruce came home he found "Miss Lester" quite at home at Woodside, his wife treating her like a favorite younger sister, while the children just worshipped her, and the servants one and all delighted to do anything in her service.

"Isn't she pretty?" asked the Marchioness of her husband. "I think she has the sweetest face I ever saw!"

"And the saddest!"

"Edmund! Why, Molly is always cheerful! I never knew her gloomy or discontented!"

"You won't keep her long!" said the Marquis, consolingly, in his fond, teasing way. "She is quite pretty enough to take some heart by storm, and I suppose you don't keep her shut up for safety."

"You know I have had so few visitors since you were away!"

"We will have a nice quiet time," returned Lord Bruce, "and then do our duty to our friends by inviting a houseful for Christmas, and, mark my words, Evelyn, one of your guests will rob you of Miss Lester!"

But when Christmas came round Molly, of her own accord, petitioned to stay in the schoolroom.

She did not care for strangers, she said. Lord and Lady Bruce expostulated, and in the end a compromise was come to. Molly and the little girls should have their meals in the schoolroom, since it really was her wish, but she must be introduced to some of the guests, and come downstairs whenever she felt dull.

"I wish aunt Allonby was coming!" lamented Lady Bruce. "She and Lewis seem quite to have forsaken me. I even sent word that I expected his favorite friend, and that did not move him to honor me with a visit!"

The paper-knife with which Molly had been toying snapped suddenly in two, but Lady Bruce never imagined any connection between her governess's sudden start and her own intelligence.

"Perhaps you have met Mr. Durant?" she went on, smiling. "I know he was a long time at the Towers last winter!"

Molly grew deadly pale, and, to her friend's dismay, she trembled like an aspen-leaf.

"My dear child!" cried Lady Bruce, thoroughly alarmed, "is there anything the matter? Have you any cause to dislike Mr. Durant?"

Molly looked wildly round the room, as though she could not understand.

"Tell me," urged the gentle poeress. "Surely, Molly, you know your secret will be safe with me! I only want to help you."

Molly looked up with an April face.

"It is all over now, only I was staying at Allonby Towers while Mr. Durant was there last year. And he thought he liked me!"

Lady Bruce started.

"A man should not think on such a subject," she said, gravely. "He ought to know his own mind, and keep to it!"

"It is all over now," said Molly, quietly. "No one ever knew of it beside our two selves. His grandfather objected very strongly, and—and there was an end of it!"

"I wish he wasn't coming," said Lady Bruce, regretfully. "He used to be a great favorite of mine—but he never will be now!"

"It will not matter," said Molly, still with that strange, far-off expression in her eyes. "You know you have promised I need not come downstairs, and—and Mr. Durant and I need never meet."

"I feel ashamed of him!" declared her friend. "I would not have believed such a thing of him! I knew he was poor, but he has enough to live on of his own without being in thraldom to his kind grandfather!"

"It was better that he found it out so soon. If we had been married, and I discovered after that he regretted, I think it would have broken my heart."

"You must show him you don't care!"

"I would rather not see him!"

Lady Bruce put one arm round her. She had something else to say, and shrank from the revelation, fearing it would pain Molly.

"Dear!" she said, in her tender way, "you shall not meet Keith Durant if I can help it, but he has been very intimate in our house. My children are very fond of him, and it may be some accident will bring you face to face. Do you think you can bear it bravely, Molly, or would you rather go to Netherton? I had meant you to have your holidays later, but I would rather try and spare you now than you should be troubled."

"It will not trouble me," replied Molly. "Lady Bruce, I can't explain it to you, but when Mr. Durant wrote to me I seemed to feel it was all over. I knew we were parted for ever. I felt the man I loved had never really lived, except in my own imagination. I can meet Mr. Durant calmly. Perhaps," noticing a shadow still on Lady Bruce's face, "he is married, and his wife will also be your guest!"

"He is not married—but he is engaged!"

"Ah!"

"His fiancee is a cousin of his own. She is considered very beautiful, but I never admired her. The marriage is a sort of a family arrangement. Lord Ogilvie has but these two grandchildren, and as the estate must go to Miss Hurst, he wished Keith to marry her."

Molly wondered if Keith's opinion of cousinship had changed since the day when he told her it was the most objectionable of all relations.

"You will not tell him I am here?" pleaded Molly.

"Of course not; but I fear he will discover it. If he does, I shall take care to show him how we all love and value you!"

But Molly had another question to ask.

"Will Mr. Durant—I mean, are they to be married soon?"

"At Easter, I believe."

"I should like to see her!"

"Should you? I really can't understand that!"

"It is not her fault," said Molly, wistfully. "I hope he loves her, and will be good to her."

"I don't think there is any love on either side!" and with this remark Lady Bruce sped away.

Molly watched the arrival from the schoolroom window, herself carefully screened from view.

She decided that her lost love was older and graver. She could form no opinion of Miss Hurst, she was so muffled in furs; but she liked the face of the tall, silver-haired man who accompanied the young couple.

"That's baby's godfather!" communicated Miss Blanche, her eldest pupil. "That's why he was christened James Tempest Ogilvie. He's such a dear old man!"

Two or three days passed, and Molly managed to prevent a meeting with any of the guests, but it was a work of difficulty; and she was not sorry when, one morning, Lady Bruce came up and said everyone had gone to skate on the lake.

"So you see, Molly," she whispered, kindly, "you need not be a prisoner any longer. I have been quite troubled to think how much you have had to keep up here. The whole house and all the grounds except the west plantation will be quite safe."

"And he does not know?"

"He has not an idea. The Marquis was beginning a lamentation the other night that you never came down to sing to us; but I frowned at him so emphatically that he stopped in the middle of his sentence before he had spoken your name."

It was just a year since Molly and Keith Durant had met, and the twelve months had changed her.

Keith had found a pretty child wandering in the woods; but it was a beautiful girl who walked briskly down the long avenues of the Grange, a little maiden clinging to either hand.

The face had gained in expression and delicacy of coloring.

Fresh country air, repose, and tranquil life had given the roundness to Molly's cheeks they had lacked before.

The brown eyes did not look unnaturally large now, and the long fur trimmed jacket and sealskin toque set off the graceful figure to perfection.

The children were bent on picking violets for their mother.

Lady Bruce loved them better than any flower; and Molly had presided over the gathering of so many that they had lost their old painful associations.

She could pick a violet or even place a knot of them in her dress now without the dull, strange pain their fragrance used always to give her in the first days of her great sorrow.

She was playing with the large retriever, who always attended them in their walks, when, looking up, she perceived that Blanche and Evelyn had found a good friend.

A moment's burning blush, and she was composed as ever, even though she knew this was the old gentleman who had come with Mr. Durant and his fiancee. This was Lord Ogilvie, the grandfather whom Keith had once told her "must love her dearly."

Perhaps if she had had to meet him as Keith's betrothed, knowing much depended on the impression she made, Molly might have been anxious and ill at ease.

Now she felt quite indifferent. It could matter nothing what opinion the Earl formed of her, so her manner was quite free from all constraint or nervousness.

She was just her own sweet self; and when Blanche tugged her forward for an introduction, she put her disengaged hand into Lord Ogilvie's as though she had been meeting earls all her life.

But she was hardly prepared for the change in his face, when Blanche answered, fondly:

"This is our governess! Her name is Lester; but we call her Miss Molly!"

Lord Ogilvie turned pale. He did not look searchingly at Molly as though to ask if he had seen her before.

He did not seem trying to puzzle out of whom she reminded him. It seemed more as though he recognized in her someone he knew.

"A pretty name!" he said, when he had recovered his agitation. "Are you staying here, Miss Lester?"

"She lives here," declared the children. "She teaches us, Lord Ogilvie. She is our Miss Molly!"

The Earl smiled.

"No need to ask if they are fond of you. Have you little brothers and sisters of your own, Miss Lester?"

Molly shook her head.

"Oh no. My parents died when I was a baby, and I am their only child!"

"She is just nineteen!" said Evy, confidingly; "for Miss Molly had a birthday last week, and we all had a large plum-cake!"

Lord Ogilvie smiled.

"What a great age! And are you happy here, Miss Lester?"

He showed so much anxiety for the reply that Molly began to wonder if in that interview with him, when he refused his consent to his grandson marrying her, Keith had spoken of her by name.

If so, and the Earl recalled it, perhaps some remorseful scruple made him glad that she should have found an easeful home.

"I am quite happy," said Molly, gently. "Lady Bruce is as kind to me as she can be. I have nothing to do but teach these dear little girls!"

Lord Ogilvie joined the two, and walked with them to the house. His manner to Molly was quite fatherly in its kindness.

She wondered how he could have played the part Keith's letter assigned to him, and asked herself again and again whether he recognized the name as that of the young lady he had so sternly refused to receive as a grandchild.

She was not long left in doubt.

"Do you come from London, Miss Lester?" asked the Earl, suddenly, as they reached the house.

She shook her head.

"I have never been to London since I can remember, though I believe I was born there."

Lord Ogilvie looked puzzled.

"I am sure you are not a north country-woman."

"No! My mother came from Netherton, and when she was dying she took me to her brother, who lives there. I was brought up with his children. I never knew any place but Netherton until I came here."

They were at the schoolroom door. Lord Ogilvie put out his hand.

"My dear!" he said simply, "I cannot explain it to you now; but you have made me happier than I ever expected to be again in this world."

And before Miss Molly had recovered from her amazement the old nobleman had left her.

"Is it not annoying," said Lady Bruce to the governess that evening when she came into the schoolroom dressed for dinner, "Lord Ogilvie has been called to London on business. He goes up by the night mail; and, unless he can dispose of his business in a few hours, he can't be back for Christmas Eve!"

"I am very sorry. We met him to-day in the grounds, and he was so kind. I do hope no trouble has summoned him home?"

"I don't think so. He was very mysterious about his errand; but he looked quite radiant. I was glad to see him so cheerful, for I think his beautiful heiress gives him a great deal of trouble."

"Miss Hurst! But I thought she was going to be married?"

"And therefore the trouble of her should fall on her future husband! A very reasonable idea, only it is not the case. Molly, I don't defend Keith in the least for the way he treated you. I felt before he came I should hate him; but since he has been here I have actually grown to pity him. I never saw anyone so changed. I think that accident must have left some injury to his constitution after all!"

Molly started.

"What accident?"

"Did you never hear of it? I suppose it was just after he treated you so badly. The day he left Allonby Towers there was a fearful fog in London. He was knocked down and run over by a cab. When he was carried home he was perfectly insensible for days and weeks. He was hovering between life and death."

The strangest expression had come to Molly's face.

Surprise, relief, joy, sorrow, and self-reproach were all blended there, with a kind of choked sob, and she caught the Marchioness' hand in tears.

"Dear Lady Bruce! You said once I might trust you—that you would keep anything I told you secret!"

"So I will."

"You will let me tell you all, and try to help me understand it?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And you won't let any one know?"

Evelyn Bruce put her arm round the girl's trembling form.

"Trust me, dear, and I will be as faithful to you as though I was your sister. Believe me, though I feel grieved to see Keith Durant so altered, I can never forget his conduct to you."

"But I begin to think I have been mistaken."

"Mistaken!"

"Listen! We were engaged the day before he left Allonby. He told me no one must know of it until he had spoken to Lord Ogilvie, but nothing his grandfather could say would change his wishes. Oh! Lady Bruce, I loved him so! I seemed to feel the difference in our rank might make his marrying me an injury to him. I begged him, if when he was away he regretted speaking to me, to let me know. If he did not come to my uncle's in a week, he said I

might believe he had altered; but he should be there if he was alive."

A strange light came to Lady Bruce.

"I begin to understand!"

"He went home the next day, and the morning but one after I received his letter. It was a cruel letter, Lady Bruce, and it almost broke my heart. Not only did he call his love for me a passing folly, but he hinted that Lord Ogilvie would be disposed to offer me a substantial reward for setting his grandson free!"

The Marchioness started.

"And you believed it?"

"What could I think?" asked Molly, slowly. "The paper bore Keith's monogram and crest: the note was written in a clear, manly hand; and I knew there was a gulf between us, though he would never let me say so."

"That letter must have been written very soon after Mr. Durant left Allonby?"

"The very day after."

"Then Molly, listen to me. For weeks after the accident Keith was unconscious. The day that letter was written he was hovering between life and death. I do not ask what you think yourself. I tell you as a fact that Keith Durant wrote that letter is simply impossible!"

The tears ran down her cheeks of a tender, womanly nature; the matter grieved her sorely.

"Don't cry!" said Molly, gently. "Don't be sorry for me. I am quite happy now!"

Lady Bruce looked amazed.

"Happy!"

"Don't you see, this gives back my faith in him. I may go on believing him the best and noblest of men. I need not regret my love and trust now, for he is worthy of both."

"But he is going to marry his cousin!"

"Yes. I hope they will be happy."

"Molly, you are too angelic. Do you think, after loving you, a man could be happy with a heartless, icy beauty, like Miss Hurst? All I marvel is, that Keith should not have come to you and insisted on an explanation."

Molly blushed crimson.

"When I got that cruel letter I was almost beside myself. I packed up some flowers—the only thing I had ever received from him—and sent them back to him, and I wrote a letter asking him to forget he had ever known me."

"And you think that letter reached him? You do not fancy the same hand which forged those cruel lines to you intercepted it?"

Molly sighed.

"I think he had my letter, and thought me faithless. He must go on thinking me so for his betrothed's sake."

Lady Bruce differed.

"He belonged to you first, and he loved you as he never can love Sybil, Molly. To my mind, he ought to be told the truth."

Molly clung to her in an agony of entreaty.

"You promised to keep my secret?"

"And I will keep it if you wish it; but, Molly, it is sacrificing two hearts to a foolish scruple. I tell you Keith loves you, and would be happier in poverty with you at his side than he can be with all his cousin's wealth."

Molly shook her head.

"You forget," she said, simply, "he is bound in honor to Miss Hurst. He must not break his word and tarnish his name just because I love him."

Lady Bruce went down to dinner thinking the love affairs of her luckless friends were going most decidedly contrary.

Poor little guessed deliverance for Mr. Durant was coming from a quarter whence she least expected it.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

On the Rail.

BY E. W. J.

THE scene was a smoking-car in an up-train from Portsmouth; the only occupants were two handsome, bronzed young officers, just returned from service.

The age of each might have been about thirty. These were Major Herrick and Captain Reid, of the 204th.

One or two incidents in the recent campaign had made these men friends. Each was bound to the other by a strong tie—gratitude for life risked for life.

"Odd that we should have hit on the same train," said Herrick, removing his cigar from his lips, and rubbing a clear place on the steamy window through which he could obtain a glimpse of the green hills and budding woods. "I thought I should hurt the old folks if I didn't show up at the earliest opportunity. I suppose you're bound on the same errand?"

Captain Reid nodded, and then, as though ashamed of the insincerity, he said:

"Partly."

Herrick looked at him, then half smiled, and raised his eyebrows interrogatively and with a meaning expression.

"What," he asked, "is there——?"

A little extra color showed in Reid's sunburnt forehead, and he nodded again.

"Come, old man," he said, after a pause, "confess. It's not only the old folks you're in such a desperate hurry to see?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you, Reid, though I have chosen to keep it quiet so far. The fact is, I'm engaged; we settled it the last thing before we went off, and now I want to fix the day, and get the business over as quickly as I can persuade her people to allow. And you?"

"Not formally engaged, but as good. It was stipulated that I was to wait till I came back for that."

"And you are going now to put the question? Well, old fellow, I wish you luck with all my heart."

"Thanks."

And Reid looked from the window with a far-away, unseeing gaze. He felt no need of good wishes. He knew what his answer would be.

His mind was immediately retracing the scene that it had been a pleasure to dwell upon during all the excitements, dangers, and discomforts of the past few months.

He seemed to stand again in a luxurious drawing-room, holding two small soft hands, while a pair of large, clear, star-like dark eyes were raised to his, the long lashes glistening with tears.

"And if I come back ——" said he, in his thoughts, to the vision he had conjured up.

"If!"

Major Herrick, too, was musing, and for a time both young men were silent.

"I think you told me," said the Major, after awhile, "that your old people lived up north.

"I did, Newcastle."

"Does she live there?"

"No; in London. I mean to stop in town one night and see her, and then go on to-morrow."

But Captain Reid was induced to alter his plans by a telegram he found awaiting him, and requiring his immediate presence at his own home.

His mother was dying. He had to put aside thoughts of love for the present, and that evening found him being borne at express speed farther and farther from her he so longed to see.

But Allen Herrick, more fortunate than his friend, found himself before many hours had passed in the presence of the one woman he had met, who had seemed to him worthy to be loved.

He had made up his mind in favor of a speedy marriage, and with some difficulty carried his point.

The day fixed for a month after, and with that he had to be content. Honor was willing to be his when he chose; but her mother, Lady Roscoe, had prejudices, and concessions had to be made on both sides.

But at last it was settled, and the Major had his betrothed to himself, and dismissing the subject of the wedding, told her some incidents of the campaign.

"I came up this afternoon with one of the pluckiest fellows in the regiment," he told her. "You will like him, I'm certain. If it hadn't been for him, I shouldn't have been here now."

"Oh! Allen!"

The young man rather enjoyed the start, and the horrified look in Honor's dark eyes.

"It was the narrowest escape," he went on. "I thought it was all over with me when Reid dashed up. There, I won't tell you any more. You are quite pale already."

"No, don't tell me any more," she said, faintly.

"Well, to return to Captain Reid," he said, touching her hand with his lips. "He came up with me, bent on a similar errand—though he could not certainly have so sweet an object for his journey as I had for mine, whoever she may be. Why, you are actually trembling! How foolish I was to frighten you like that!"

"I am not frightened," said the girl, and suddenly burst into tears.

There was more than one man who would have given a great deal to be in Major Herrick's place, with the pleasant task of consoling the fairest debutante of the season.

* * * * * *

It was on the day after this that Captain Reid was sitting by the bedside of his mother, who held his strong brown hand as though she could never let it go.

"I wish you were married, George," she said, in her faint, plaintive voice. "I should not feel then that I was leaving you so entirely alone."

"Don't talk of leaving me, mother," he said, simply.

"My dear, I may as well talk of it, as let it come upon you as a surprise. But, George, is there no one yet? Are you not thinking of taking a wife?"

The soldier flushed, and stroked her thin hand gently.

"Yes, mother," he answered, softly. "There is someone."

The invalid looked at him eagerly.

"You are not engaged, George, or you would have told me. What is she like?"

He hesitated an instant, and then drew out his pocket-book.

"I have her likeness here," he said, and taking it out, he gazed at it lovingly for an instant before giving it to her.

"Well, mother, what do you think of her?"

"It is a lovely face," she murmured, half to herself. "Does she care for you, George?"

"She gave me that," he said, as though this were sufficient answer to her question. "She is so young and unspoiled, mother; so free from vanity and affection."

"I hope she will make you happy, my darling boy," his mother whispered, laying her cheek on his hand. "You deserve a good wife."

* * * * * *

The great Northern express was just leaving King's Cross. The passengers had taken their seats when a young man dashed on to the platform.

It was Captain Reid, looking pale and worn. He had been during the past month with his widowed mother, whose life had been despaired of from day to day.

She was dead, and he had to run up to town on business connected with her affairs, and was returning home for the funeral.

The train was already on the move as he sprang in, two or three people looking after him with a disapproving shake of the head, and a muttered:

"That's driving it too close."

There were already two persons in the car, seated opposite each other at the farther end—a lady handsomely dressed in a rich brown silk traveling-costume, who kept her face turned to the window to hide her blushes, for the rattle of the door-handle had cut an embrace off short; and a gentleman, who faced the intruder with an annoyed expression.

However, the instant their eyes met there was an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"By Jove! Reid, it's you! How are you, old man!"—and the two grasped hands. "Honor, my friend, Captain Reid. George, my wife."

The lady looked round quickly on hearing her name spoken, and showed a beautiful, glowing, girlish face—glowing, that is, for one second of time, before it paled to an ashy white. She gave a kind of gasp, and sat as if turned to stone.

Her husband cried, hastily:

"Good Heavens, Honor! Are you ill? What is the matter?" and then glanced at his friend, whose smothered exclamation seemed to strike on his ear a few seconds after it was uttered.

Had he indeed said "Honor!" in that tone of agony?

Reid was standing up, holding by the brass rod of the net for luggage, staring wildly at the blanched face of the bride, for the young couple were just starting to Scotland for their wedding trip.

And as the Major looked from his friend to his wife, the blood receded from his own cheek, and his handsome face grew cold and stern.

Those sweet lips; then, could utter what was false; those star-like eyes meet his, while their owner deceived him. She had told him that no other man had ever spoken to her of love.

"Honor!" said Reid again, for it seemed the only word he knew how to speak.

"Oh! George, I never meant——" she gasped out, but the rest of the sentence seemed frozen on her lips.

She shrank farther into the corner, cowering under his gaze, her head drooping lower, and yet lower, while the daintily-gloved hands went up, and hid her colorless features. Still lower her head sank, until it almost touched her knees.

Reid was the first to recover his self-possession, and grasp the situation. His own hopes of happiness were wrecked, and it appeared that he had almost wrecked those of his friend.

"Mrs. Herrick," he said, slowly and sadly, "do not be distressed. You have not the slightest cause to reproach yourself on my account. If I was vain enough to imagine your friendly behavior meant that you looked upon me as something more than a friend, the fault was entirely mine."

There was the faintest motion of dissent from the cowering figure. Herrick saw it, and understood, but by Reid it passed unnoticed.

"You were in no way to blame," he added. "I wish," and he had to pause, for his voice was not quite under control, "I wish you both every happiness."

So far Herrick had not spoken since his wife's sudden pallor drew from him those exclamations of surprise and dismay. He saw the tears stealing between her gloved fingers—tears of grief, of shame, or of both? He raised his hand now with a half-impatient gesture.

"Spare yourself, Reid," he said. "I am not blind."

Captain Reid looked at the door, as though he would willingly have fled, and undone so far as he could, by his absence, the harm his unexpected intrusion had wrought.

There was a sudden, awful crash, a splintering of wood and breaking of glass, and a stunning blow on his head, which rendered him for a few minutes insensible.

When he recovered, the train was standing still, while the air seem full of excited voices, cries, and groans.

The first object of which he became conscious was Herrick tearing wildly at a wreckage of woodwork, the blood trickling down his face from a wound on his forehead.

"Here, Reid! Help! Quick! This is killing her!" he cried, frantically.

Reid staggered to his side and tried to lend his aid, for Honor Herrick was crushed under a mass of fragments, from which her husband was powerless to extricate her.

"Stop!" she cried out, in an agonized voice. "Don't touch. Let me die as I am. George, I am dying. Forgive me!"

"I do," groaned Reid, and turned away his head.

"I am glad this—has happened," Honor whispered, with her eyes on those of Major Herrick. "You would never have forgotten this, Allen. You would—never—have loved——"

Her voice sank, and the young man saw her die. A mist came over everything, and he swooned.

It is understood now among the other officers of the 204th, that those two staunch friends, Major Herrick and Captain Reid, are not to be "chaffed" about love affairs. The sad story of the former's brief happiness is known, but over the melancholy of the latter hangs a veil that the Major alone could lift.

Scientific and Useful.

RICE CEMENT.—A cement very much used in China and Japan is made from rice. It is only necessary to mix rice flour intimately with water and gently simmer over a clear fire, when it readily forms a delicate and durable cement.

A POINT IN STONE-SMASHING.—It is well known that a stone, however large, may be broken by striking a sufficient of number of blows with a hammer; along the line where it is desired to break the stone. In this process the force of the blow is expended in gradually weakening the cohesion of the particles in a line following the direction of the blows. This weakening is increased by each successive blow until finally rupture occurs.

TESTING ROOF SLATES.—A German trade journal advocates the following method of testing the quality of roof slates: The samples of the slate to be tested should be carefully weighed, and put into boiling water for a quarter of an hour. The water must, however, be fairly free from lime, saltpetre and ammonia. The slates are then reweighed, and those that show the greatest increase of weight are those most capable of resisting deterioration.

HEAT FROM GAS.—While the electric light is gradually taking the place of illuminating gas in Germany, the latter article is evidently going to meet with an extensive sale in another direction, on account of its considerable evolution of heat. In comparison with the electric light, it is this property which is, apart from minor brightness, considered as its principal deficiency. It is stated that the heat from equal amounts of gas and coal is in the proportion of 36 to 15.

SHELVES.—If you have more books than places to keep them, get a carpenter to make a wooden frame with no back and a series of shelves. Set this against the wall, and cover top and sides with plush or cloth, or the wood may be ebonized instead. A curtain suspended on rings to draw aside is an improvement but not a necessity. Arrange your books on the shelves and your pretty old china on top, and you have a useful and fashionable piece of furniture.

CARE OF THE PERSON.—Merely warm the back by the fire, and never continue keeping the back exposed to the heat after it has become comfortably warm. To do otherwise is debilitating. When going from a warm atmosphere into a cooler one keep the mouth closed, so that the air may be warmed in its passage through the nose ere it reaches the lungs. Never stand still in cold weather, especially after having taken a slight degree of exercise, and always avoid standing on the ice or snow, or where the person is exposed to cold wind.

Farm and Garden.

DISEASE.—Every new fact discovered about the disease of farm animals emphasizes that these diseases are owing to impure drink from ponds and sluggish creeks more than all other causes combined.

COLD AIR.—It has been discovered in California that a cold air blast dries fruit in a most satisfactory manner. Samples of fruit dried in this way, apricots, and apples, two years ago, are still in a perfect state of preservation.

KICKING.—The farm journals are full of all sorts of devices for kicking cows. The best method is simply draw the cow's head up so high as to cause a down arching of the spine at the loins. Several who have tried it report favorably upon it.

COWS AND HORSES.—In cases of either cows or horses, proper care cannot be taken of them until their peculiarities are well understood; and whoevers undertakes to make the most of his stock must make every individual one a special study. If cows are watered out of a pail it may be found that one animal will drink only out of a certain pail, and if a change is made it will be instantly detected. Few cows will eat hay that another cow has breathed upon. It is well to humor the animals in such cases, while studying to supply the proper quantity and quality.

INSTITUTES AND CLUBS.—Farmers' institutes and clubs have done much to educate the farmers to a knowledge of better systems of agriculture. The advantages are the expressions of individual experiences, which often brings on beneficial discussions of special subjects. Co-operative effort in procuring thoroughbred stock, and the making of experiments aid improvement and add to the wealth of such a community. The winter is the appropriate time for such organizations, and the children should also be induced in some manner to become interested.

AMMONIA OF FERTILIZERS.—The escape of ammonia—the most volatile, but the best part of the manures about the homestead—is, in a great measure, the cause of the strong odor from stalls, barnyards, sinks and privies. In the stable a bedding of a dry muck, a couple of feet thick, will arrest and imprison the fugitive, while a slight covering of leaves and straw will keep the animals unsoiled while lying down at night. The foulest stable floor will lose its pungent odor in a few minutes if overlaid with fine muck or pulverized peat. Dry, and especially burnt clay, broken fine, common ground plaster, and sawdust, are also excellent absorbents. The excrements should be removed daily, and the litter, say once a fortnight.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 5, 1889.

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TO FRIENDS AND READERS.

We hope that those of our friends and readers who are kindly in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST, will enter the field as soon as possible this year and try at least to double their old lists. We also hope our readers who have not heretofore sent us a club will try to do so now.

We wish to get a great many more clubs for the coming year, and trust every one of our present subscribers will make an extra effort to secure one or more new friends for us.

THE POST is much lower in price than any other first class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get one new subscriber at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

Retrospection.

Reviewing the pleasurable incidents of former days in a calm and impartial manner can hardly be characterized as unprofitable.

It is somewhat of a truism to say that anticipatory pleasures always remain so; but though they may attain fruition, they do so not in the manner or to the exact or full extent in which they are planned; they either exceed or fall short of one's expectations, but in no case do they exactly coincide with them, and this is a well known fact.

Consequently, the fallacy of dwelling on anything in anticipation is sufficiently illustrated by personal experience; it is unprofitable, illogical and unreasonable!

Retrospection is something quite different; it is a sort of returning in spirit to former scenes and times, a brief living over again in memory of other days.

To prevent misapprehension, it is better to particularize a little. There is a similar difference between regret and retrospection that there is betwixt remorse and repentance; the one is a morbid, unnatural condition, the other is a healthy and promising state of feeling, often highly beneficial in its results.

Regret means a dwelling on the past only, to the exclusion of present facts and of future pleasures.

Retrospection, though like in action, is of a different time; it consists in remembering pleasant days, people and places that we have enjoyed, and recalling happy times in such a way as to appreciate not only what they were then, but what they will in all probability be to us again if we wait quietly and patiently till seasons and events come round once more in due course.

Memory is either a blessing or a curse; but in our little life, which seems so long and important to us, it is generally both. The only thing is that here we have the power of keeping it within proper bounds by the exercise of that invaluable safeguard, strength of will, or of developing it and encouraging it when the doing so will be for good, and the remembrances thus evoked are likely to be beneficial to us, which is sometimes the case.

Some persons, not content with private retrospection, continue it audibly, and will corner one on a Sunday or winter afternoon and enlarge from an apparently endless stock of purely family and domestic narrative, which they deliver in a monotonous stream of would-be eloquence.

This is perhaps the most disagreeable kind of retrospection of all.

Absence of reticence is also to be deplored, although the social lights of modern society, in all sets and cliques, are not generally characterised by excessive frankness or candor regarding themselves.

Confidences are not to be encouraged, even though repaid by advice. One feels half regretful after, and this flashes back on one when meeting or seeing a person to whom has been confided any cherished secret. Whether silence has been kept since or not, the feeling remains. One remembers the saying, "Two can keep secret if one be awa."

The conclusions, therefore, to be arrived at are that retrospection pure and simple is beneficial, but regret, to be striven against like the temptations which attempt to alter the causes of it, engender in the mind.

That it is better, wiser and safer to live in the present, letting the dead past bury its dead, and leaving the future to take care of itself; to live, not to vegetate, or cling like a limpet to its rock; to make the most of friends and pleasures while they are yet ours; so shall we have less reason for remorse or regret when they are no more.

To live, not forgetful of a to morrow here below, and all it may or may not bring of joy or sorrow; to philosophically do without what we can never have, and by a prudent course of conduct, lay up for ourselves a stock of experience, knowledge and common sense for the days to come.

Make the best of what one has. This much we are certain of: we know the best and the worst that can happen to us here; we cannot say as much for eternity. But the day is ours—a long one, with time for all things—and on our use of it and its opportunities the character of the night must surely depend.

THERE is not such a mighty difference as some men imagine between the poor and the rich; in pomp, show and opinion there is a great deal, but little as to the pleasures and satisfactions of life. They enjoy the same earth and air and heavens; hunger and thirst make the poor man's meat and drink as pleasant and relishing as all the varieties which cover the rich man's table; and the labor of a poor man is more healthful, and many times more pleasant, too, than the ease and softness of the rich.

NONE has more frequent conversations with disagreeable self than the man of pleasure; his enthusiasms are but few and transient; his appetites, like angry creditors, continually making fruitless demands for what he is unable to pay; and the greater his former pleasures, the more strong his regret, the more impatient his expectations.

TALK to the point, and stop when you have reached it. The faculty some possess of making one idea cover a quire of paper is not good for much. Be comprehensive in all you say or write. To fill a volume upon nothing is a credit to nobody; though Lord Chesterfield wrote a very clever poem upon nothing.

IT is resignation and contentment that are best calculated to lead us safely through life. Whoever has not sufficient power to endure privations, and even suffering, can never feel that he is armor proof against painful emotions; nay, he must attribute to himself, or at least to the morbid sensitiveness of his nature, every disagreeable feeling he may suffer.

PITY and forbearance, and long-sufferance and fair interpretation, and excusing our brother, and taking in the best sense, and passing the gentlest sentence, are as certainly our duty, and owing to every person that does offend and can repent, as calling to account can be owing to the law, and are first to be paid; and he that does not so is an unjust person.

THEN bravery founded upon the hope of recompense, upon the fear of punishment, upon the experience of success, upon rage, upon ignorance of dangers, is common bravery, and does not merit the name. True bravery proposes a just end, measures the dangers, and, if it is necessary, the affront, with coldness.

THERE is but one way to tranquility of mind and happiness; let this, therefore, be always ready at hand with thee, both when thou wakest early in the morning, and all the day long, and when thou goest late to sleep, to account no external things thine own, but to commit all these to God.

IT was prettily devised of Æsop: the fly sat upon the axletree of the chariot-wheel and said, "What a dust do I raise!" So are there some vain persons that, whatsoever goeth alone or moveth upon greater means, if they have never so little hand in it, they think it is they that carry it.

IT is a noble and great thing to cover the blemishes and to excuse the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his stains, and to display his perfections; to bury his weaknesses in silence, but to proclaim his virtues upon the house top.

AN honest reputation is within the reach of all men; they obtain it by social virtues and by doing their duty. This kind of reputation, it is true, is neither brilliant nor startling, but it is often the most useful for happiness.

ALL pleasure must be bought at the price of pain. The difference between false pleasure and true pleasure is put thus: for the true, the price is paid before you enjoy it; for the false, after you enjoy it.

THERE are those who prefer the language of the mind to that of the soul. They are very like those who are indifferent to the sight of a starry night, and who run to an exhibition of fireworks.

HE that to what he sees adds observation, and to what he reads reflection, is in the right road to knowledge; provided that, in scrutinising the hearts of others, he neglects not his own.

PLEASURE is a necessary reciprocal; no one feels, who does not at the same time give it. To be pleased, one must please. What pleases you in others will in general please them in you.

BE sure that you omit not to relieve the needs of your enemy and the injurious; for so, possibly, you may win him to yourself; but do you intend the winning him to God.

AVERSION from reproof is not wise. It is a mark of a little mind. A great man can afford to lose; a little, insignificant fellow is afraid of being snuffed out.

ATTENTION to the mind is the natural prayer that we make to interior truth, that may discover it.

WHATEVER you may be sure of, be sure at least of this, that you are dreadfully like other people.

THAT veil which covers the face of futurity is woven by the hand of mercy.

The World's Happenings.

One acre in Wall street, New York, is worth $14 200,000.

There are 11,466 female commercial travelers in this country.

James A. Stewart, who was recently elected mayor of Griffin, Ga., is but 22 years old.

An experiment recently made in England proves that a tortoise can walk a mile in four hours.

There are 3 064 languages in the world, and its inhabitants profess more than 1,000 religions.

A "tootometer" has been invented which will make a noise that can be heard as far as 10 miles.

Thomas Wilkinson, of Vernon, N. Y., has a beard 5 feet long, which he wears tucked under his vest.

Bakers in Chicago are now required by law to stamp the weight and their names on every loaf of bread.

The Arkansas Legislature has declared the pronunciation of the State to be Ar-kan-saw, accent on the first syllable.

A Western statistician figures out that the people of the United States spend more than $1,500,000 every year for chewing gum.

An Albion, Neb., horse stepped on a hoe and the handle flew up, entering the animal's stomach. Death resulted in five minutes.

Old boots and shoes, steamed to a pulp, are now converted into the soft, stamped, ornamental leather so popular for artistic bookbinding.

The strength of Berlin cars is about to be tested at the Royal Opera, where 200 trumpeters are to give a concert in which they will play all at once.

Charles Fisher, of Bellefontaine, Ohio, on a wager, ate 36 raw eggs, and then expressed a willingness to devour 12 more if anybody would pay for them.

A citizen of New Ulm, Minn., owns a horse whose eyes, he claims, change from a very light color to dark blue 24 hours before a change in the weather.

There is nothing new under the sun. The German Museum at Nurnberg has acquired an ornamental bowl made from paper pulp in the sixteenth century.

When E. G. Rowe, who had been fishing from a boat in Pushaw Lake, near Bangor, Me., pulled up his anchor he found a valuable gold ring on the end of it.

Fifteen thousand students engaged in the late annual competitive examinations in China. The excitement was so great that a number of contestants went crazy.

James Miles, an Idaho man, refused to chip in even a nickel to bury a fellow townsman, and a bolt of lightning killed 13 horses for him on the day of the funeral.

A colored woman of Chambersburg went to a party recently, and on her return she found that rats had almost devoured her infant child, whom she had left alone.

Nathan Hopkins, of Whitman, Conn., was robbed of a sum of money 24 years ago. The other day he received an anonymous letter containing the stolen cash and full interest.

An unscrupulous dentist of Paris, after chloroforming a patient, with the supposed intention of extracting a tooth, robbed the helpless sufferer of $1000 in money and then decamped.

George Seesholtz, of Canton, O., held his 6 year-old daughter while his wife burned holes in her hand with a red-hot poker. The child had accidentally burned her little brother with the poker.

Less than 50 years ago there was not a photograph camera in the world; to-day there are 14,000 photographic establishments, to say nothing of the thousands of amateur outfits, in the United States.

An eagle on exhibition in a Bridgeport, Conn., store window escaped, and flying around the room struck the cushion of a striking machine and was killed. The machine registered the blow at 120 pounds.

At Owenton, Ky., when a verdict of not guilty was declared in a homicide trial the audience applauded. The judge ordered the doors closed, and imposed a fine of $1.50 on each person who applauded.

At one of the colored schools in the South the girls learn housekeeping by being placed four at a time for a month in a cottage, where they live and have complete control under the oversight of a matron.

It is estimated that there are 3 000 000 men in America who get shaved three times a week. That means an expenditure of 20 cents a week, or $11 40 a year for each man, or for the 3,000,000 $12,000,000 annually.

West Nottingham, Chester county, Pa., boasts within its borders a young man who has been married 2 years, has a pair of twins and two other children, but was denied a vote at the recent election because he was not quite of age.

At Bloomington, Cal., the 2 year old daughter of Albert Dunford fell upon a beer bottle, the neck of which was broken, and a splinter of which penetrated her heart. The child was dead when lifted from the ground by her mother.

A permit from the Brooklyn City Railroad Company to carry her dog on the cars of the various lines of the company, when they are not crowded and the passengers do not complain, has been secured by a lady living on the Heights. The dog is a tiny black-and-tan, and the permit is good for three months.

A St. Louis suicide wrote: "I am 62 years old. In 8 years I would have been 70, an old, dilapidated, tottering fossil. I have played the world out and it don't owe me a cent. I've had more fun than a mule in a corn-field and I've got enough. Therefore I will cheat the course of nature and jump the time to come."

THE LONE GRAVE.

BY FRANKLIN CARRIGAN.

I passed thro' a city of silent dead,
And, lo! in a corner alone,
I found a little grass-grown grave,
'Round which the weeds had grown.

No marble cross stood at the head,
Nor told the sleeper's name;
He might have been a peasant poor,
Or one well known to fame.

Perhaps oft o'er that little mound
Most bitter tears were shed,
By those who loved the slumberer
And mourned that he was dead.

Alas! lone one, so fleet passed by
By those who loved thee dear;
The bitter tears quick ceased to flow
When happy smiles drew near.

Oh, how uncertain is the heart!
It soon learns to forget;
It dreams this world so fair a place
It will not know regret.

A Dead Letter.

BY A. G. R.

UNCLE ANDREW ALISON was not an easy or a pleasant person to live with. Audrey and I, his two nieces, both feared and detested him, and I cannot say how truly thankful I was when Duncan Ferrars asked me to become his wife.

Audrey and I had lived with Uncle Andrew ever since when, in my seventh year and Audrey's ninth, our father had died in Canada—first in a small house in Holloway, then, after our uncle grew rich and was knighted, in a large house in Bedford Square, which was, I believe, the dullest abode in all the great city.

Our mother had died soon after our father, and, as Audrey and I did not get on well together, it may be easily imagined that a good, true-hearted man's love—though that man was only a poor struggling young doctor—was a real blessing to me.

Uncle Andrew was, I have often heard, one of the cleverest and most influential railway contractors of his day

He and my father had started in business when they were both young, with a small joint capital which had gradually grown into a colossal fortune.

I do not wonder at this, for Uncle Andrew was careful of money almost to miserliness. Audrey and I had a small allowance, and throughout the whole establishment any luxury of furniture, food, or culture, was sternly forbidden as extravagance.

How my father had bequeathed his interest in the business he had helped to build up, or why, in default of a will, some legal settlement had not been made on our behalf, were questions which occured to Duncan and me more than once when we began to consider ways and means. But to these questions I could give no answer at all.

The only person who might have thrown some light on the subject was my mother's cousin, Cyril Holmes, who was a great friend of both of us, but especially of Audrey. However, Cyril, though he had been in the employment of Alison Brothers for many years, was no better informed than ourselves.

As to asking my uncle directly, that was an extreme measure not to be resorted to lightly.

It was because Cyril Holmes' admiration for Audrey was no secret that Uncle Andrew frequently took the opportunity of telling us that he was a lazy, worthless fellow, who would never make his way in the world; or be worth the salary he drew.

To these attacks, Audrey always listened with indifference, which would not have been the case had she really loved poor Cyril.

My uncle also took great pains to acquaint me with the extremely low estimation in which he held Cyril's friend, Duncan Ferrars; but this carefully instilled knowledge did not prevent us from deciding to ask his consent to our speedy marriage.

My lover obtained but a brief audience in which to plead our cause.

From the sitting-room window, in which Audrey and I spent our mornings, I saw him come to the front door, and soon after I saw him go.

It was not difficult to fill in the hiatus of that ten minutes.

The front door had barely closed behind Duncan when Lee, my uncle's confidential man, came to tell me that Sir Andrew wished to speak to me in the library.

If Audrey had cared for me as elder sisters sometimes care, she would by that time have been comforting me a little and trying to keep up my courage.

As it was, so soon as I told her that Duncan was coming across the Square, she began to practise the noisy part of the Moonlight Sonata, and only stopped playing, when Lee brought his message, to say:

"My goodness, Sylvia, I wouldn't be in your shoes—you're going to catch it."

"I don't care if I am," I replied, defiantly. "It will soon be over."

"He'll forbid you to see Mr. Ferrars again."

"I shan't be forbidden."

"You'll do yourself very little good by defying him."

"I shall do myself less by throwing Duncan over," I returned.

Audrey raised her eyebrows and twisted round on the music-stool, which gave a horrid creak, as if it were jeering at me. Then Lee tapped at the door again.

"Sir Andrew's message was for Miss Sylvia to come directly," and he held the door open for me to pass. Lee was no friend of ours. He looked almost glad to hurry me to hear my fate.

My uncle was sitting in his big easy-chair with his back to the light, holding the newspaper before him.

As he was a small thin man, he was completely hidden from me till such time as he should choose to lay down the paper, which he could not have been reading very intently, though he let me wait five minutes by the clock, pretending not to have heard Lee's announcement or my tremulous: "You sent for me, Uncle Andrew—here I am."

Presently he emerged from behind the paper which he had laid down, and looked at me.

He had a small, thin, clean-shaven face, with resolute lines round his large mouth; his eyes were more piercing than any human eyes I have ever seen, and their keenness rarely softened, never entirely gave place to any other expression.

I sometimes used to wonder if my father was or ever would have grown like his brother.

The thought crossed me now, as taking off his heavy gold pince-nez and looking straight at me, he said:

"Ah, Audrey—I mean Sylvia—there you are. Now what is all this nonsense?"

"What is all what nonsense, uncle? I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Yes, you do, miss; don't waste my time with silly prevarications"—then I saw that I might as well put away any faint lingering hope I had ventured to bring into the room—"you understand me perfectly. I repeat: What is all this nonsense?"

"Perhaps, Uncle Andrew, our ideas of nonsense are not the same. Perhaps what you are calling nonsense is not nonsense to me." I tried to answer with composure, but my words rushed out in the most undignified flurry.

"Humph!" returned my uncle, "I have no doubt that your ideas of sense are vague in the extreme, so are young Ferguson's—Fellow's—what's his name? I suppose you know whom I mean, and that he has been here"—he raised himself sharply and leaned forward towards me. "He seems, from what he came to say and the way he said it, to be a fair specimen of a ninnompoop."

"Yes, I knew Duncan had been here, I saw him come."

"Duncan, indeed! Why do you call him Duncan? I thought his name was Fletcher, or Fenton, or something else begining with an F. Why do you call him Duncan?"

"Mr Ferrars' christian-name is Duncan, Uncle Andrew, and I speak of him by that name because—because we have promised—because he has asked me——" Oh! if I could only have spoken boldly; but with those eyes on me, and those thin lips twitching to interrupt me, I could not keep from stammering.

"I can help you out," he said, grimly, "because Mr. Ferrars—you said Ferrars, didn't you?—has already let me into the secret. According to his version, he, a penniless young fellow, who has just finished walking the hospitals, hopes to make a good thing out of marrying the niece of the great contractor, eh?"

"He doesn't hope anything of the sort!" I cried, angrily.

"Ah, indeed; then I misunderstood. I gleaned from what he said—in fact he put it in the plainest terms—that he did wish to marry you, and that you wished to marry him."

"Yes, that is quite true; but he does not want me because I am your niece, nor because he hopes to benefit by a connection with you, but because he loves me."

"Indeed, that is most disinterested of him," returned my uncle, with a sneer.

"Then his visit to me was merely to see how I would take the news that my penniless niece wanted to marry a pauper."

"I don't know what you mean by a pauper. Duncan has money enough to buy a practice, and to furnish a small house."

"Very good—for him—but that makes no difference to the other part of the programme. If he isn't absolutely a beggar—you are."

"I'm not a beggar, Uncle Andrew!" I cried, indignantly. It was too despotic a fiat to be submitted to.

"Ain't you, Miss Pert? I think you had better think matters over before you give me a flat contradiction."

"But you—you——" I began, too much excited to get on with my answer.

"I said so," he broke in. "You have calculated on me; you know I am well-to-do, and your high-flown young sawbones thinks a wealthy contractor would be a very comfortable figure in the background of his domestic felicity."

"We never took you and your wealth into account at all," I retorted. "We should have been most foolish to hope for any assistance from you. But I should like to know how I can be a beggar, when my father invested all his money in the business which has made a millionaire of you."

My uncle had leaned back in his chair again. I could not see his face, partly because of the shadow, and partly because my eyes swam with the difficulty and excitement of bringing these difficult words over my lips. He did not answer, and I felt I had gained an advantage.

"Audrey and I cannot have cost you so very much," I went on, gathering courage. "We have been brought up more inexpensively than girls generally are——"

"In fact, I have defrauded you from your childhood," he said, drily; "and now you are going to have it out with me."

"You did as you thought right," I replied, more submissively; the sound of his voice told me that I was going to be humbled. "But now I am twenty-one, and Audrey is twenty three, and we have talked it over with Duncan, and we should like——"

"To have your father's money, with compound interest," he interrupted again. "In two words that is what it all means; eh?"

"We hope you will settle something. Please do, Uncle Andrew. I don't understand about money matters, but Duncan says——"

Once more he interrupted me, and this time even more impatiently than before.

"Don't understand about money matters! No, I should think you didn't; but for all that, you and your journeyman doctor want to audit my accounts, and pry into my private concerns for the last five-and-twenty years. Well, then, you'd better have the bank-books, and the cheque-books, and the letter-books, public and private, and work back through them, if you could, to the year 1868—the year we were out in Canada; you will find the funds of Alison Brothers at a very low level at that epoch; and you would also find that the elder brother——you know," he broke off, "which was the elder brother, I suppose?"

"It was father," I rejoined, and in my inmost heart I believed that he was building up a story as he went on, which should justify his making no settlement on us.

"Yes, it was your father, and you'd find that he, the elder one who signed for the firm, was mixed up in a lot of risky speculations, and that, in spite of the younger brother's expostulations, he made several visits to New York and one into Mexico. He was going to grow rich all at once—that is quite within a woman's comprehension—only, unfortunately, there were some complications, and out of the complications came a terrible crisis, the whole details of which did not transpire to the public. And one fine morning the younger brother found himself alone in the world, facing a heavy responsibility, which he had not incurred himself, but for which he was not wholly unprepared. I hope you understand it all. It required immense exertions to regain the lost prestige, and most assiduous work to recover from the money damage: but I have done it. And now I hope you understand."

"You mean," I said—though my mind absolutely refused to accept this story of which I had never before heard a hint—"that my father lost everything of his own, therefore we have nothing; and that he had nearly ruined you, we must consider you most generous to have fed us, clothed us, and educated us from the time we were left orphans."

"That is near enough to my meaning," he said.

"Well, Uncle Andrew," I said, "so far from this being an impediment to my marriage, I consider it an additional reason for it. Mr. Ferrars loves me; he will be only too glad to take me from dependence on charity to a home of his own."

It was an ungrateful speech; it was the only way in which I could give vent to the bitterness of the doubt which his words had awakened in me. My uncle bent his head.

"I shall be very well rid of the charge of you. You have always been a troublesome, hot-headed girl. If you had deferred to my wishes, or shown any common sense about your marriage, I should have made you an allowance—for my own sake, and because people would expect it of me—but since you take this defiant tone, I give you full leave to go to-morrow—to pauperism, if the doctor is ready. You are your father over again: you want to play with ruin. You won't find it a very pleasant companion. I have no more to say to you—you can go."

I went slowly and heavily back to the sitting-room, where Audrey was still at the piano. She looked up enquiringly.

"You have been a long time, and you look perfectly ghastly," she said. "What did he please to say?"

"He told me a great tissue of the basest lies," I cried, my indignation breaking forth. "I couldn't have believed he could have done anything so bad."

"Lies about Duncan?" she asked. "And how do you know they are lies?"

"Not about Duncan—about father. Audrey, do you think it possible that our father was a swindling speculator, and that he died a bankrupt?"

"I never heard of it before," said Audrey composedly. "But we know so little about him that it might be possible. Railway folks do speculate and swindle sometimes, and fail bankrupt, don't they?"

"Oh, Audrey, how can you talk so? Cyril knows nothing of this, I am sure. I won't believe it unless some one else tells it me." And I repeated the whole tale to Audrey.

"I don't see why it shouldn't be true," she said, at the end. "Of course Uncle Andrew wouldn't talk about it unnecessarily, and as it all happened in America nearly twenty years ago, why should Cyril, who is only thirty, know about it. And so," she added, "he has knocked your engagement on the head."

"That he hasn't. He has only concocted this story to get out of parting with any of the money, which has been in his hands so long that he looks on it as his own. He thinks two girls like us will believe anything, and he knows we have no remedy. He cares for nothing but the money."

"Well, and how is it to be with your engagement? I suppose you will have to wait till Duncan is a little better off."

"I shall not do any such thing, nor will Duncan wish to. If Uncle Andrew thinks he can spoil this happiness for me he is mistaken."

"You will be a fool to defy him. Of course he will be perfectly justified in doing nothing for you if you do defy him."

"I should be a bigger fool if I made Duncan and myself miserable in deference to him; and as to doing anything for me, I tell you I don't believe that story about our father; and what he finds a good excuse for shirking now, he would always try to shrink—that is, he'll never part with his precious thousands till he dies, and then most likely he will bequeath them for the building of some hospital, so that his name may be handed down as that of a public benefactor."

"Sylvia," returned Audrey, "it is no use reasoning with you. You will have your own way, I know. All I can say is that I, in your place, should be guided by Uncle Andrew's wishes."

So the discussion ended; and a few weeks afterwards Duncan and I were married very quietly at Saint Pancras Church.

Cyril Holmes gave me away; but Audrey did not even come to my wedding. She did not even ask me at what o'clock it was to be.

* * * * * *

When Duncan and I first settled in our new home, in an out-of-the-way Staffordshire village, we found ourselves persons of considerable importance.

It had transpired—such things always do transpire—that Dr. Ferrars had married the niece of Sir Andrew Allison, the great railway contractor, and this fact cast around us a halo reflected from my uncle's well-known name and wealth.

Many of the county dignitaries called on

us, and I found myself treated with deference by my neighbors in the village.

Our new circle, however, was not long in discovering that between the man of millions and his niece yawned a gulf which neither had any intention of bridging over, and the great expectations which had attended our installation, shrank away disgusted before our diminutive and unpretentious establishment.

These social questions did not trouble us.

Duncan was glad to be able to devote all his spare time and attention to scientific reading and experiments, and did not want to get into the swim of local gaieties. Unfortunately, he found more time for reading than he cared to bestow on it; besides which, his practice was so scattered through the lonely moorland farms and hamlets, that a hard day's work was far from being a remunerative one.

I tried not to grow faint-hearted as we gradually realized that the investment, which had absorbed nearly all our capital, was a mistake.

I gave myself every possible trouble with housekeeping, in which, of course, I was by no means an expert; and, in order to make both ends meet, I calculated every penny with a parsimony which would have done credit to Uncle Andrew.

It availed me nothing; the ends did not meet.

Every week there was a wider gap between the limit of the money and the limit of the needs.

I soon found that I had to forego every little luxury myself, and that Duncan must be deprived also; and, after I had reduced my domestic staff to the smallest possible apology for a maid-of-all-work, my poor husband dismissed the stable-boy, and took the office of groom upon his own shoulders.

I can see it all now: how when he came in from a long tiring round, on a muddy, dark afternoon, I used to seat myself on the corn-bin holding the stable lantern while he served his apprenticeship as a hostler.

We tried to make a joke of it; but our laughter was only a make-believe, for, in spite of everything, we were getting into difficulties; and the suave consideration with which my first orders had been received by the local tradesmen, had given place to disdainful inattention and aggressive demands for settlement of fast growing accounts.

The butcher was appeased at the cost of a pearl set, which had once been my mother's and then I used every precaution not to get into his black-book again.

This meant that we had to be very sparing with beef and mutton until better times came.

But better times did not come, or at least did not come permanently.

Life was one incessant struggle, until sometimes I felt as if it would be useless to struggle any more.

Audrey wrote to me with tolerable regularity, but she did not ask any searching questions, and I was too proud to confide in her.

If she could believe that story about our father, and that Uncle Andrew was justified in what he had done regarding my marriage, she and I could never be on a confidential footing again—besides, such a confidence might have looked like an indirect appeal for help, and we had not yet fallen so low as that.

One day—it was the second winter of our marriage, and baby was three months old—I sat in the sitting-room with my accountbooks before me.

I had been a long while ill, and still longer recovering, so that there was a terrible accumulation of liabilities to be investigated, and the prospect was not very encouraging.

I had no trinkets left wherewith to cover a deficit, and my few pretty wedding presents had followed in the train of my jewelry.

As I sat thus with throbbing head and a shawl round me to make up for the meagreness of the fire, there came an imposing rap and ring at the street-door.

I scarcely ever had any callers then—the halo of importance had long faded, and people looked terribly askant at us—so my little maid was scarcely equal to the emergency of opening the door to a visitor who sounded so important.

She pushed open the sitting-room door with an awkwardness so complete, and an apron so black, that tears of mortification rose to my eyes, as she announced tremulously, "A gentleman, mum;" and Cyril Holmes walked in.

For one moment I felt inclined to laugh and cry with delight, the next I remembered that after this visit our poverty could no longer be a secret from my relations, and the words of welcome died on my lips.

"I needn't ask how you are, Sylvia," he said: "and I hope I shan't hurt your feelings if I say that you look awfully pale and thin."

"Do I?" I tried to reply briskly. "You see, I've been rather ill, and getting about again tires me."

"You look very busy, too, for a convalescent. Why on earth do you have all these papers about, if you feel tired?"

"Oh, I must do something," I answered, mendaciously. "It amuses me."

"Does it? Perhaps it amuses you too much. You ought to be glad that I have come to be a substitute in the way of amusement."

He spoke gaily, but there was something troubled, in his manner, which I, in my preoccupation, put down to the impression my comfortless home must be producing on his mind.

But when he began to talk and to question me about Duncan, I saw that the burden on him was not ours, but his own; and that, though he tried to appear interested in my answers to his questions, his thoughts were straying to something else.

Presently he got up; walked to the cradle; and looked at my quiet, little, wan baby.

"What have you called it, Sylvia?" he asked. Then, before I could answer—almost, in fact, as if he did not want an answer—he went on: "Audrey is not so brave as you are, Sylvia."

I looked at him. I saw that he was going to tell me his trouble.

"It is strange to one so calm as she is should not be braver," he continued. "Do you know why I have come to see you? Naturally you would not require any reason, but there is one, and I am going to tell you all about it. I have grown tired of waiting for Audrey. Perhaps you do not know that she made me a promise to be my wife some day—long before you were engaged to Duncan. She made a great secret of it, and said I must be patient. Heaven knows I have not been impatient, time is going on. I am eight and thirty; Audrey is past her first youth. What is the use of waiting? Andrew Allison will never learn to like me now. We are only wasting our lives. I have been thinking this out ever since your marriage; and the other day I went to her, and asked her if she loved me enough to keep her promise without delay. Sylvia, can you believe it?"—poor Cyril! his voice faltered—"You could not guess."

"I think I can," I replied. "I am sure she refused to."

"Worse than that."

"You mean that she has given you up."

"She really has, Sylvia; I cannot believe it; she gave me up as if it did not hurt her a bit, and now——"

"You have not come to ask me to use my influence with her, Cyril," I interrupted.

He shook his head. "No, indeed, I haven't. I have not allowed myself to cling to any vague hope. I thought I should like to tell you all about it, and to bid you good-bye. I couldn't stay in London. I have left Allison and I am going to America. I came just for old times' sake."

"You wouldn't care to tell me what she said?" I hazarded the words timidly; I was, in truth, very eager to know how Audrey could have accounted for her resolution.

"I will tell you all you care to hear. She said that your uncle had told her plainly that she might marry me as you had married Ferrara, against his will, but she added, she had no mind to go and live a pauper's life—to be in debt; to be scouted by respectable people—good gracious, Sylvia, what am I saying? I beg your pardon. Don't cry, dear; what a brute you must think I am?"

But it was no use telling me not to cry. I was too weak to restrain the floods of tears that lay so near the surface always now.

"Who told them all that?" I sobbed. "Who told them that we were in debt, and that people are turning their backs on us? How could Audrey know it, and never send me a word of sympathy? How dare Uncle Andrew know it, and never send us a dollar? Oh, Cyril, he is a wicked, cruel man. He has been the means of breaking your engagement, because he knew that Audrey was too cautious to be driven into marrying against his will. His object is to avoid any necessity that might arise for accounting for my father's money."

I had left off crying now—the anger in my heart had scorched up my tears.

"I do not think you are quite just in what you say, Sylvia." Cyril said, as I paused for breath. "You know you were breaking with your uncle when you married. It is not likely that he will make advances to you; other men in his place might but he is too obstinate. As to Audrey, I feel sure she is acting on her own conclusions—her love for me has worn out—perhaps, even, she cares for some one else."

He spoke half interrogatively.

"That is possible," I replied, "but I am not in Audrey's confidence; I never have been. I know this much about her—though it is a hard thing to say of one's sister—she is a very cunning woman; she will stay with Uncle Andrew to the last: she has no heart to break, nor will she care if yours is broken. When she is growing old and worn out, Uncle Andrew will die and leave her all the money he loves so dearly—that money that partly belongs to me. It is too shameful. If he has heard of our poverty, does not his conscience tell him that our creditors have a righteous claim on that of which he is defrauding us by weak pretences?"

"Sylvia," said Cyril, very seriously, "you are ill, and over-excited, and you scarcely know what terrible things you are saying. I don't like Andrew Allison, myself. I know him to be absolutely without affection, and that he has a real pleasure in tyrannising over those who are in his power; but I have worked for him for fifteen years, and his honor and honesty I firmly believe to be without reproach."

"And I, Cyril, have lived under his roof for nearly all my life. I think I know his character, and what he is capable of, quite as well as any one can. I look upon him as quite capable of appropriating our money when we were little, and refusing to give an account of it when the time came. It is waste of time to argue about it."

"But, Sylvia," Cyril replied, "if you are in need, why not make the first steps—perhaps that is all he is waiting for—why do you not write to him?"

"Do you think I would tell of all our troubles to him, who has no sympathy with any one?"

"But if he knows them——"

"Besides," I went on, "Duncan would not like it. It may sound ridiculous, but the mere curiosity of our postmistress would be almost enough to keep me from writing to Sir Andrew. She actually had the assurance to ask me one day why I did not write, and tell him what difficulties we are in sometimes. You are laughing at me, Cyril: you don't know what such trifles weigh when they touch a sore place."

"I dare say it is very galling," he replied, sympathetically, "but this is not the only post office in the world. Suppose you write now, and suppose I take the letter with me to Liverpool and post it. I am on my way there now, and shall sail to-morrow; then it would escape curious eyes."

"I will!" I cried, "since, as you say, he knows of our poverty—half the humiliation is spared me. I shall have a good starting-point to tell him what he richly deserves to hear."

"My dear Sylvia!" cried Cyril, "I did not mean that kind of letter. Do not venture on any rash assertions or accusations. Tell him what straits you are in, and that you have a claim on him, but do word it carefully."

"I am going to word it carefully," I replied, taking my pen to begin; "do not trouble yourself about what I say. It is between him and me, and it shall be a case of kill or cure."

"Would you like to see it?" I asked when I had finished it. "I am a little hazy about legal matters, and you might, perhaps, help my ignorance."

He hesitated.

"I had rather not, Sylvia."

"You are no braver than Audrey," I rejoined, contemptuously. I felt immensely brave myself just then. "If you had had more courage, who knows how things might have been?"

He smiled rather sadly—then, after giving me a great many messages for my husband, he went away, carry my letter with him to Liverpool.

Poor Cyril! and this was the end of his patient love for Audrey.

I was glad, later that evening, that I had written, hurried as the impulse had been: for when Duncan came in, he looked more tired and wan than I had ever yet seen him look.

"You really must make a better fire, Sylvia," he said, though I had increased it in honor of his arrival. "I am starved through. No, thanks, no bread and butter, that butter is so nasty. I will have some tea as strong as you can give it to me."

My heart sank, as I looked at him and felt his burning forehead.

Was he breaking down under his burden?

The next morning I got a letter from Audrey.

She must have known that Cyril was coming to see us, for she had gone to the trouble of giving me an explicit version of her own side of the breaking of their engagement.

"Cyril was horribly foolish to act as he did," she wrote, "but, perhaps, I was a little hard on him. I certainly did not think he would take what I said so much to heart as to resolve on leaving England; when I had had time to look at the matter all round I wrote him a few lines to take off the sharp edge of his disappointment. Uncle Andrew can't live for ever; in fact, he seems to have aged and worn-out a great deal this last year; I may be free to do as I choose in a short time, and I put it to Cyril, how short-sighted it was to bring about an unpleasant crisis instead of waiting a little longer."

Was ever woman more heartless and calculating than my sister Audrey?

I read this sitting by Duncan, who was in bed with what he chose to call an influenza cold.

But he did not impose upon me for a moment, and, even if he had, the course of the day would have been very undeceiving to me.

By evening he was lying half unconscious, with burning hand and pulse at fever-rate; and, whatever name the doctors might have given to his illness, it would only have been the scientific disguise for starvation and over-work.

On the third day of his illness I was surprised to see another letter from Audrey—a letter, whose perusal came as a thunder-clap in my already tempestuous sky.

"You will no doubt be startled to hear that Uncle Andrew is dead. Lee found him yesterday, in the library, struck by apoplexy while reading his letters. He recovered consciousness for some time this morning, I believe, though I did not see him. He sent for the lawyer as soon as he could speak, and I believe they all thought he was going to get over it; but, late this afternoon, he died quite quietly and suddenly. Of course neither of you will go to the trouble and expense of coming up here for the funeral, as you know so well what his irrevocable decision about you was. I am awfully sorry that you never made it up with him. I shall of course do my best to help you if the terms of his will allow me to do so."

As I read, the words kindled and glowed as if they had been written with fire.

Lee had found him struck down reading his letters—smitten to death.

Something, whispered my conscience, must have agitated him terribly.

Yesterday, in Audrey's letter, meant the day before yesterday, and Cyril took my letter to Liverpool—when?

How many days ago was it since Duncan had come home ill?

I had lost count of everything. I took up Audrey's letter, and looked at the date again; and again I tried to reckon when my letter, posted on Cyril's journey, would have come into my uncle's hands.

Bah! what was the use of worrying? Out of so many letters that reached him every day, why should mine, or why should any letter at all, be it at the bottom of this sudden death-stroke?

It might have been the course of nature; Audrey said he had grown older and much weaker.

If I could only have told it all to Duncan—all that I could remember of that angry letter—how I called him a thief base enough to defraud an orphan; how I had upbraided him with all our misery! But Duncan lay half asleep and half unconscious.

I could not lighten my conscience by asking him to say that it did not seem to him probable my letter had anything to do with it.

All day long I went about in a pitiful state, and in the evening I wrote to Audrey telling her of Duncan's illness, except for which I should have certainly gone to Bedford Square at once to learn all the particulars—to see if there were any chance of my being cleared in my own eyes from the apparent consequences of my seemingly rash deed.

Audrey's answer came by return. She said it was a pity I was so urgently required at home, as Uncle Andrew had left directions that I was to be summoned to the funeral.

"Fancy," she said, "his treasuring up a mortification for you, even when he was not there to enjoy it. Ever since I heard," she went on, "that he had been struck while he was reading some letter, I have been expecting to hear that all his fortune had collapsed, as the fortunes of great contractors occasionly do; but Mr. Long, the lawyer, assures me that there is no probability of such a thing. I have talked to the doctor, too, and he says he fancies it was a private letter, which annoyed him very much just when he was least able to bear agitation."

So there it was. I had longed to punish Uncle Andrew, and I had done this thing. I reasoned with myself, I argued for and against myself; but there the matter was, and Uncle Andrew had ordered that I was to come to be present at his funeral! That was, in itself, overwhelming evidence against me.

It was the afternoon of the day on which Sir Andrew Allison had been followed to his grave by some hundreds of men who had been interested in his life and startled by his death.

Audrey and I had been chief mourners, and Audrey, who did not even assume the slightest show of grief, wondered why I was so terribly shaken.

"I suppose it is all you have gone through lately," she said, "for you can't be humbug enough to want us to think you are sorry for him."

She said this as she and I, and one or two far-away cousins, some old employes and the servants, were collecting in the dining-room to hear the will read. The library had been first mentioned; but I had ventured to object, and to my amazement, the lawyer had promptly deferred to my half-expressed wish that we should not go into that fatal room.

I sat down by the fire, clasping my baby in my arms, while my thoughts rambled off to my poor husband, lying so weak and lonely far away; and, sitting in imagination beside him, I ran through all the gamut of self-accusation and reproach, which I felt must kill me. I did not, I dare not listen to the will. I knew that my own name would come sooner or later, and then——!

Presently, sooner than I expected, Mr. Long read it aloud with great emphasis. Then I heard my father's name, and the room seemed to waver and float all round me.

"When was this will made?" I exclaimed.

I knew, but I wanted to stave off the evil moment.

"Didn't you hear the date?" asked Audrey, sharply.

"I drew it up for the late Sir Andrew," replied Mr. Long, "on the morning of Thursday last, the twelfth instant, during the few hours of consciousness which preceded his death, and during which his faculties were so little impaired that I was astonished to hear, later, the sad news of his decease."

He then proceeded, and by degrees I learned from the long involved sentences that there was incontestable proof of the truth of what my uncle had said about our father, and that though I had been ungrateful and defiant in my conduct, he considered me honest and trustworthy; therefore, after a few legacies to the distant relations, to the oldest employes and the house servants, he left me heiress to the whole of his property, to the exclusion of his elder niece Audrey Allison.

Then the property was specified, but I did not hear anything further. How could I accept this enormous fortune after what I had done?

Surely in those last hours Uncle Andrew must have been strangely changed, to have made such an unheard-of reply to my furious attack!

I looked across to where Audrey sat with wide open, half dazed eyes. Yes, he had been true to himself; this exclusion of her was just one of those tyrannical caprices which had made our lives so burdensome.

I really pitied Audrey, and I made up my mind that she must not suffer from my fault.

The short silence which followed the

lawyer's voice was broken by her.

"He was a wicked old man," she cried in a sharp, bitter voice, heedless of Mr. Long and the rest of them. "A wicked old man! I have sacrificed my best years to him, and he has left me a pauper; while Sylvia, who consulted nothing but her own selfish happiness, is to be a millionaire. It is too hateful. I do not believe he was sane at the last."

"My dear Miss Allison," said the lawyer "he was perfectly sane—marvellously collected. His will had been settled quite differently; he altered it from beginning to end; but I am convinced he knew what he was about. I know why he did it."

"I think I know, too," I said, with an effort to make some amends by confession. "It was that wretched letter. Audrey is right; he may have been sane, but he acted as if——"

The lawyer cast a glance of inquiry at Lee during my words, and Lee, in answer to this, interrupted me, or rather I paused to hear what he was about to say.

"No, sir, certainly. I never mentioned anything about it. Master desired I should not; they were his first intelligible words."

"So I understood; in fact, Sir Andrew's solemn charge was that, after the will had been read, and not on any account sooner, Miss Allison was to know what had become of her letter."

"Miss Allison!" I exclaimed; "you mean me, don't you, Mr. Long? The letter I speak of, was from me to Sir Andrew Allison."

"There is some mistake, my dear Mrs. Ferrars," replied the lawyer, benignly. "Sir Andrew, several times on his death-bed, distinctly asseverated that you had borne your power—, hum, your separation from your family with perfect fortitude; but that he only knew that by side winds, as he had had no direct communication whatever with you since your wedding."

I stood aghast. What had become of my reparative letter?

Was it possible that I was really free from the incubus that had weighed on me so heavily during the last week?

"Here," continued Mr. Long, producing from his pocket-book an envelope marked "Postal Service," "is the document I was to return to Miss Allison."

With the keenest interest I watched her open it. She drew out a letter in her own handwriting, addressed to Cyril Holmes, which had been returned to her through the Dead Letter Office.

"And why did he presume to open this?" she asked, defiantly. "It is the old story, that listeners never hear anything good of themselves."

"Sir Andrew wished you to be told that, misled by the appearance of the cover, he opened the letter without noticing the address; I suppose when he saw the contents he investigated them. He did not justify what he had done, I think he considered he was acting according to his rights, as your guardian."

I had no need to see the letter itself, to recall the outline of its meaning, which Audrey had written to me a little while ago. For perhaps for the first time in my life, I felt a touch of pity for the hard old man, who had been so bitterly wounded by the heartlessness of the one person whom he believed to be true to him.

"And you had written to him, Sylvia?" said Audrey, when we were alone. "Why did he tell a falsehood about it on his death-bed?"

We had looked everywhere for my letter but could find no trace of it. It was very odd.

A week or so later all was explained, when Cyril, writing from New York directly on landing, sent me back the letter he had undertaken to post.

"Don't be angry with me, Sylvia," he wrote, "for my want of courage. I felt that if you had had time for consideration, you would have worded your letter to Andrew Allison differently. On landing, I heard of his death, which has caused quite a sensation here. I am sure you will be glad that you did not insult him so deeply in the last days of his long, useful life."

I do not think anyone will be surprised to hear that Cyril did not lose Audrey after all.

About six months after Uncle Andrew's death, she went out to New York, where they were married, and have settled.

Duncan and I have left the Staffordshire village. We are rich enough, now, to live as we like and where we like; but we never pass a day without speaking of the days when we were so poor that Duncan groomed his own horse, while I sat on the corn-bin and held the stable lantern.

How It Happened.

BY J. CASSELL.

EVERYBODY in the little town of Lyrs-sur-Ye was astonished when it became known that Mr. Mathias was dead.

He was barely forty-five years of age, and was a robust man, as straight as an arrow. About three years before he had become the husband of a young girl of twenty, a niece of the tax collector, and whom he had loved with frenzy.

Of course, once dead, Mr. Mathias was credited with having been, during his lifetime, the possessor of every virtue. It would have gone hard with one who should have dared to speak of him as having been a usurer or miser, as people termed him while living.

After all, in thinking the matter over, was there anything so very extraordinary in this death? It was plain that Mr. Mathias had had forebodings of its approach, for had he not, but a short time before, sent to Paris for workmen to erect in the cemetery the mortuary chapel that was at that moment waiting to receive his mortal remains? Besides, it had been noticed that of late he had prowled about his house as if fearing mysterious robbers. He sequestered his wife, and closed himself up for weeks at a time in his laboratory the chimney of which seemed in a blaze every night.

"All these were the premonitory symptom of a brain trouble," had said Dr. Labarre, who had decided that death had resulted from apoplexy.

Mr. Mathias had had a splendid funeral. One-third of the population of the town had followed his remains to the graveyard, and it may even be said that there were a few moist eyes when the oaken coffin was lowered into the crypt of the chapel, a real monument in itself, where two men of his size might have slept at their ease.

The mourners returned from the funeral, wondering what the widow would do now.

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Now, the truth of the matter is that Mr. Mathias was not dead.

Two hours after the ceremony, any one who might have been in the vault where the coffin rested would have certified to the truth of this statement.

Two sharp clicks, like the snap of a spring, resounded and the coffin opened like a closet. Mr. Mathias sat up, stretching his limbs like a man just waking up. Through a grating in the ceiling a little light entered. Mr. Mathias stood up, slowly rubbing his slightly benumbed knees.

Taking all in all, he felt comfortable—quite comfortable.

The dose of the narcotic, which he had carefully measured himself before taking, had had the exact effect he desired. People had supposed him dead, and had buried him; so much the better.

Since a long while Mr. Mathias had made his preparations. The vault had been filled with great care. In it there were suitable clothing, food, and a few bottles of good wine.

As noting stimulates the appetite more than a funeral, even if it is one's own, Mr. Mathias seated himself comfortably on his coffin, broke his fast, and drank good luck to the future.

It is about time to say why, of his own free will, Mr. Mathias was at that moment six feet below the surface of the ground.

As usual, there was a woman mixed up in the matter. Unmoved by feminine charms until the age of forty, Mr. Mathias, formerly an apothecary, who had made a fortune with anti-spasm pills, fell in love with pretty Anne Piedefer, the niece of the tax gatherer at Lyre-sur-Ye.

He had bluntly proposed to the young girl, who had just as bluntly refused to become Mrs. Mathias, in consequence of which he fell in love like a fool.

Not being of an over-honest nature, he had weaved such a subtle web about the tax gatherer that in less than a year's time, knowing that the Government's cash did not count up right, the unfortunate man was seriously considering the advisability of committing suicide.

It was at this moment that Mr. Mathias appeared in the guise of a saviour and made his terms. The niece offered herself up as a sacrifice to save an uncle who had been a father to her, although her affections were already pledged to a clerk in the office of a notary in a neighboring town. As a sad victim on the altar of duty, Anne became Mme. Mathias.

Soon she felt all the consequences of the catastrophe. Mr. Mathias (and perhaps he was not far wrong) was convinced that his wife hated him.

From this conviction to the belief that she was deceiving him, there was but one step. Ever tormented by this suspicion, he became a monomaniac.

His wife never put her foot out of doors, and nobody came to see her. Still, Mr. Mathias imagined that the reason he did not catch his wife wrong-doing was on account of his awkwardness, and in his own mind he voted himself an ass.

It was then that a bright idea struck him. He would pretend that he was going on a journey, not to Versailles or Harve, as do comedy husbands, but on a long, long journey, from which it would seem very difficult for him to return.

And then some night, he would come back as much alive as ever, to the great confusion of the guilty one.

He allowed himself three days' time, and he was quite pleased with himself as he thought of all this, in stretching himself out comfortably in his coffin once more for rest.

* * * * * *

Mr. Mathias was getting impatient as the third day drew to a close. He waited until the cemetery clock struck eleven, the hour he had chosen to begin operations.

His plans had all been well laid. Once over the wall, he would hie straight to his wife's apartment. Then the fun would begin.

Mr. Mathias dressed himself, and everything being all right, he tilted over the marble slab covering the vault, climbed up into the mortuary chapel, opened the door, and walked out into the graveyard, with his winding sheet on his arm.

As soon as he got into the alley he unfolded the ample shroud and tried to cast it round his shoulders. But the sheet was quite heavy, and he failed completely in his attempt.

Just as he was about to try it over, he heard a voice behind him say—

"Hold on, I will give you a hand."

* * * * * *

Not to realize what a disagreeable surprise this would be is a certain proof that one had never been, at midnight, in a graveyard trying to put on one's shroud.

The voice that had addressed Mr. Mathias came from the sexton of the graveyard, old Grimbot, an odd fish, well known in all the neighboring taverns. He drew near, and looking Mr. Mathias full in the face, exclaimed—

"Hallo! is that you, Mr. Mathias? Already!"

"I have just left my tomb," said Mr. Mathias, in a hollow voice.

"So I see," said Grimbot, interrupting him. "You seem to be in a much greater hurry than the others."

Mr. Mathias suddenly turned towards him and extended both arms, exclaiming at the same time—

"Begone, profane man! Begone!"

"Tush, tush!" said Grimbot, in a fatherly tone. "Don't mind me. After all, I suppose you want only to take an airing, like other fellows."

Mr. Mathias kept on straight ahead, not deeming it worth his while to answer. He soon perceived, through the darkness, the gate of the cemetery. Being always prepared for the worst, he had a few louis in his pocket.

"Come," said he, offering a couple of gold pieces to Grimbot, "let's waste no time in talk. Here, let me have the key."

Grimbot stepped back, exclaiming—

"What!—the key!—you want to go out! That's a funny notion. But, I say, none of that."

"I'll give you five dollars," groaned Mr. Mathias.

"Say, now stop that," replied Grimbot, "or else I shall knock you in the head. I have no objection to your leaving your tomb and walking about. The others do so, too."

"The others! What others?"

Grimbot gave a wide sweep round with his hand as he replied—

"Why, the dead, of course."

"The dead! Who is talking to you about the dead? Why, man, I am alive; still living—don't you see?"

"Pheu! that is an awful joke. But, see here, I am a good fellow. Come along and take a drink with me."

"Listen to me, good man," said Mr. Mathias. "You want to have your little joke at my expense. Well-and-good. But there is a time for all things. For a reason that concerns me only, I have allowed myself to be buried. Now, business of great importance requires my presence outside. Let me go, and, I assure you, I shall pay you well."

While he was speaking Grimbot had slowly walked round the table and taken a position, standing, with his back against the door.

"You are a good talker," sneered he, "So you are alive, eh? Well, you are not the first that has told me that. You see, I hear such strange stories. I am quite fond of my subordinates. Every night one or two of them come, without ceremony, to take a drink with me. Last night it was the notary. You know whom I mean: your neighbor, Rudel, the one that has the broken column. The night before last I had a call from Mme. Claudin; a mighty fine looking woman, I tell you. I am a good fellow. I let them walk about at night and chat with them, as to but letting them go outside, that is quite another thing."

Mr. Mathias began talking, pleading, promising, supplicating. Why, how could he, the good, kind, intelligent Grimbot, make such a mistake as to take him for a dead man?—and he burst into a fit of laughter.

"Here," said Grimbot, curtly, "enough of this. So long as you won't behave reasonably, you will have to go in again."

"Go in again! Go in where?"

"Into your home, of course. At the corner of the third division."

"Into the tomb? Never!"

"You won't? Once! Twice!"

Mr. Mathias looked at the enormous hands. Overcome with terror, he glanced around, looking for an opening to escape through. There was but one—the door—and there was Grimbot propped up against it. Anyhow he had to pass, cost what it may. And, so he rushed forward with a scream.

Grimbot quietly put forward his open hand, into which the throat of his assailant fitted closely. Mr. Mathias hiccoughed and tried to struggle. The hand closed more tightly.

Mr. Mathias slid down to the floor, kicked about for a little while, and then remained motionless.

Grimbot, like one used to occurences of this kind, picked him up, and, walking with the dignified step of a man conscious of having done his duty, he carried him back to the tomb, where he cast him into the crypt. He then kicked the slab back into its place, closed the grated door, and resumed his walk among the tombs, muttering—

"Did you ever see the like? Wanted to go out, eh! And me lose my situation. Not much."

This is why Mr. Mathias' widow was able shortly after, to marry the one she had always loved.

A STORY comes from Nebraska to the effect that there is a school house in Blaine county, the roof of which is made of "willows and sod." "Whenever an urchin meanders from the broad path of virtue the teacher has only to reach up extract a portion of the ceiling and proceed to chastise the youth so meandering."

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A Norwegian woodchopper near Carson City, Nev., ingeniously profited by an accident. He discovered a leak in one of the mains of the water company, where a jet was forced out under an enormous pressure. After experimenting he found that this stream would cut wood equal to a fine saw, "so he set to work and now makes handsome brackets of choice woods, which find a ready sale." Such is the story, at least.

Hardly has Paris recovered from the shock attendant on the fall of the chandelier at the Theatre Lyrique, when a young lady, leaning too far over the second balcony of the Opera Comique, is participated onto the head of a gentleman in the parquette. As this is the house where young people, whose parents have matrimonial intentions for their future, are taken to have a look at one another, it seems probable that this sudden and unexpected meeting will result according to the established traditions.

The authorities at Dresden have been investigating the question whether the circulating libraries are a medium for the spread of infectious diseases. They rubbed the dirtiest leaves of the book, first with a dry finger and then with a wet finger, microscopically examining the product in each case. In the first case scarcely any microbes were found on the finger; in the second, plenty! Though these appeared of non-infectious character, the committee winds up with a recommendation to readers not to wet the finger in the mouth for the purpose of turning over the leaves.

Probably the biggest tombstone in this country is that of late Henry Scarlett, of Upson county, Ga. Mr. Scarlett was very rich and misanthropic. He led the life of a hermit, and the neighbors said that it was because he had been disappointed in love. Several years ago he sent for a stonecutter in Atlanta, and had him cut an inscription on a huge boulder over ten by 20 feet in dimensions. Then a cave was dug down under the stone, and in it a coffin was placed to await Mr. Scarlett's death. This happened not long ago and now the body rests under the big tombstone.

By all odds the most gorgeous dude in Paris is the Russian duke Mondelli, who dazzles the town and delights his mamma, Princess Woronzoff, at "interviews" by donning either an ivory plush dressing gown, lined with peach colored satin garnished with silver braiding and ornamented with jewels, or an aspic jacket of heliotrope velvet braided with gold and clasped together with ducal coronets and studded with brilliants, while the interesting "being" himself reclines on a divan, and when he is conversing with his visitors toys with precious stones and diamonds of rare value, but unpolished and uncut.

A contemporary observes that it is distressing to notice that the morals of the collector have reached the schoolboy and perverted his ingenious nature. The organ of a famous stamp dealer, "while most anxious to oblige young collectors," regrets to announce that he "must emphatically decline to send out sheets for inspection unless the request is countersigned by a principal, tutor, master, or other reputable person." It appears that genuine stamps sent on approval have been replaced by forgeries. In future every offender will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law.

An Onslow, N. C., mother, who left her two children, aged 18 months and 3 years respectively, alone at home while she went on an errand, looked around after going a short distance to find the building in flames. She ran as quickly as she could; but reached the fire only in time to hear the last wail of the younger child as it perished. The poor woman was frantic. She endeavored to enter the house, but was beaten back by the flames. The roof was about to fall when she heard another cry and discovered that the older child was crouching under the house with fire falling all around it. The brave woman crept through the fire and got the child out safely, though its clothing and her own were almost entirely burned. An instant later the house fell in ruins.

The English *St. James' Gazette* says a correspondent makes a startling statement, and gives as his authority the positive and sober assurance of an important friend on the staff of a London hospital. We are assured that the surgeons carry out painful operations on the patients which they know to be useless, and do not even trouble to make successful. The knife is used not to benefit the patient, but simply by way of experiment or demonstration. The reason why medical men are becoming reckless of the pain which they inflict upon their patients is that they are not able, except by compliance with a number of tiresome regulations, to conduct their scientific experiments on living animals. The law is very careful of rabbits and frogs; but it leaves the human subjects to look after themselves. There is no position in life so helpless as that of a patient in a well organized hospital. He is unable to act, sometimes unable to think for himself, and, except at certain times, he is cut off from intercourse with the outside world.

Our Young Folks.

THE KITTEN'S GRATITUDE.

BY G. W.

HE was not that very Moses who was amongst the bulrushes, and yet it was precisely because he was found amongst the bulrushes that he was called Moses.

I say he, and yet, as I am telling an absolutely true story, I must set one small matter right before I go any further—my Moses was a she.

And now to start straight. She was found amongst the bulrushes, and so it seemed to the person who found her impossible that she should be called by any other name but Moses.

Whether she ever had had another name I cannot say; her history, as far as I know it, began in the bulrushes by the river's side.

The "person" was the squire, a young man, handsome, athletic, and fond of sport. He was whiling away the best hours of a bright June morning angling in the river, dropping the hook, with its tempting bait, in amongst the ripples.

The silly young fishes whose first season this was, and who thought they knew a great deal better than their fish papas and mammas, swallowed it readily, but the wary old wiseacres scurried away from it as fast as their fins would carry them.

This is how it happened that the squire had no so-called sport on that especially bright June morning.

He had reeled in his line, vowing to come another day and take his revenge upon the big fishes who had objected to be caught, when he heard a feeble little mew from a bed of rushes bordering upon the river.

Although he was in the habit of catching fishes, shooting birds, and hunting foxes, he had a real love of all animals in his heart and could not bear to hear the cry of one in pain or distress without trying to help it, which perhaps seems a little strange.

Many strange things are true, however.

When he heard that little mew he immediately forgot his vexation at the stupid fishes, and went to see what frightened creature had uttered that cry.

It sounded like that of a cat; but cats do not usually live in the water with the fishes: and I may remark in passing that it is a good thing for the fishes that they do not.

Poking in among the bulrushes with the thick part of his rod he found the thing that, as the conundrum tells us, is most like a cat—a kitten; a poor little, miserable, half-drowned kitten, who had uttered its last cry, and who, was its rescuer not at hand, would have closed its eyes on this cruel world the next instant.

You know what your own little, fat, roly-poly pussy looks like when you have felt in duty bound to give him a bath, but I hardly think you can imagine the abject wretchedness of this kit when it was hauled out from the bulrushes, with every bit of fur dripping, and a scared look in its little eyes.

It was so weak it could not stand on its feet, but tumbled over upon the grass, stretched out its paws, and rolled its eyes. There was not a mew left in it.

He had put shots into hares and rabbits, and birds on the wing, he had taken fishes off the hook many a score of times, but the squire had a heart full of compassion for this miserable little object whom nobody seemed to want; the string about its neck told its own piteous tale.

It struggled on to its feet while he looked at it consideringly, and shivered and tottered, lifting its eyes in wistful appeal to him.

"Why shouldn't I live?" it seemed to say, with a longing gaze.

"Why shouldn't you indeed? the world is big enough."

And he picked up the little dripping bag of bones, and tucked it inside the breast of his shooting-coat.

What a warm soft nest that was! Pussy showed her appreciation of it at once by beginning to purr, a feeble little broken purr at first, but it grew stronger and stronger every instant as she and her deliverer went up through the meadows, and made their way to the House.

* * * * * *

The squire's lady, who was young and pretty, had been having a very busy morning, so busy and absorbed she had been that she quite forgot her promise to take her hat and stroll down towards the river before luncheon. Her business was indeed a very absorbing one.

If I had not told you she was the squiress of the village you might have supposed, if you could have peeped into the room where she sat at work, that she was a rather big girl playing with her doll's house.

Perhaps she was still young enough to like her occupation a little better than she would have done had it had nothing to do with dolls. In truth she was furnishing a doll's house.

It was for a fair that was shortly to be held in the village to help to clear off the debt on the new village schools.

This Lilliputian mansion was to be the centre of her own stall, and her gift to the bazaar; she wanted it to be as perfect from attic to basement as it could be made.

I wish I had time to tell you how really beautiful each room was, but if I once begin about the doll's house I shall never get back to Moses, and this is her story.

She was just considering which of two pretty materials would look the nicer for drawing-room hangings, when Moses, in the bosom of her deliverer, came into the room.

"Back already!" said the squiress, without looking up.

"I've brought you another foundling," said the squire, tipping his hat to the back of his head and at the same time unbottoning his shooting coat.

Kitty supplemented his words with a mew, stronger now, but quite as plaintive as the one that had drawn the squire to her rescue but a short while since.

Magdarling—that was what the squire called the squiress, so I suppose it was her name, only it looks rather funny in print—forgot the large doll mansion as soon as ever she set eyes on kitty.

"Oh, you poor, little, miserable cat!" she cried, taking Moses into her arms; "wherever did you find her, Brian? Why, it is nothing but skin and bones! Ring for milk, and bread, and a basket. Oh! do be quick. Kitty, you poor little mite, where did you come from?"

The maids had to fly hither and thither for Moses' sake, while the squire went away whistling to pay a visit to his dogs, satisfied that kitty was in good hands.

So she was too; the poor, little, half-starved, deserted animal had begun a new and better one of its nine lives.

Wrapped in a warm blanket, put into a padded basket, set in the sun, and fed with warm milk, what more can any cat desire? This little kitty was contented and grateful enough, and purred and slept, and slept and purred, and ate of its dainties and purred again.

At luncheon Magdarling learnt her history, and adopted her then and there into the household by the name of Moses.

* * * * * *

By the time the doll mansion was finished, and ready for private inspection, before the eventful day for its despatch to the village hall had arrived, Moses had become very much at home indeed, and had developed into a fat, roly-poly, frolicsome kitten.

There was nothing about it but its name to tell you in what a sad manner its happy little life had begun.

It had many friends in that large establishment, but showed a decided preference for the society of the master and mistress, especially at meal times.

One day some guests who had come to lunch expressed a wish to see the doll mansion.

This at that time was the right thing to do, for every one knew the pride and delight Magdarling had taken in her labors.

As soon as the meal was over the guests were marshalled to the room where the doll mansion stood in all its glory, not quite with a flourish of trumpets, but in that spirit of satisfaction which seems to imply such an accompaniment.

Moses brought up in the rear of the procession, walking steadily behind her betters, with tail held well aloft, expressive of a general desire to know all that was going on.

The doll mansion was pronounced to be wonderful, charming, most complete, and a great many more adjectives.

Magdarling's eyes glowed as she pointed out one little addition after another to the furniture and fittings of the rooms.

"I thought of this, and Brian made that," she exclaimed with childish delight that amused some of her listeners, to whom it was evident that the squire had a hand in fitting up the dwelling.

Her face fell when one of the visitors actually had the temerity to suggest that a few mouseskin rugs disposed here and there would make both dining and drawing-room absolutely perfect.

"I never thought of such a thing, and they certainly are pretty and a great improvement," said Magdarling to her husband when they were once more alone together. "How can we get them, Brian?"

"Send Moses to catch the mice and I will dress the skins," was his merry and thoughtless response, as he went to sort his flies for the next day's fishing.

"Oh, Moses!" exclaimed her mistress, as she lifted her to her lap; "I do wish you would make yourself of use for once, and go and catch me a mouse."

"M—o—e—w!" said Moses, and her whiskers quivered as she darted from her mistress' lap and made for the door.

She turned then, gave another reassuring mew, and vanished.

They had tea under a tree on the lawn that day, the squire and the squiress, and were in the midst of its enjoyment when a half-smothered mew was heard, and Moses came in haste across the lawn.

She held something in her mouth which she brought and laid down at her mistress' feet.

It was a little dead mouse.

The squire exclaimed, Magdarling laughed and praised Moses all in a breath, and never before or since was a cat so proud of its achievement.

"But this is not enough, Moses; we want more," said Magdarling.

"M—o—e—w," said Moses; and he stalked away on its second quest.

Four mice, one after the other did that grateful little pussy-cat bring and lay down at its mistress's feet, amidst such plaudits as have seldom fallen to the lot of any conqueror returning in triumph.

The skins were duly dressed by the squire and disposed as suggested.

On the day of the bazaar endless was the praise bestowed upon them.

And when the story of Moses' achievements was told a very heroine of heroines did that little rescued cat become.

This is quite a true story, although I expect you will think it as wonderful as if it had only been imagined.

THE WICKED GNOME.

BY T. L. P.

BOB and Rob were brave little fellows in sailor suits. They were out for a holiday with some cents each, and they meant to go for a walk in the country, and buy cakes and milk at some farmhouse, and come home late in the day.

In a grassy lane they saw a yellow pool of broken eggs, and a poor little girl with an empty basket was sitting under the hedge, crying her very heart out.

"Oh! here's a jolly spill!" said the two boys, and they asked the little girl if she had tumbled.

"No," she sobbed, trying to dry her tears with her apron. "I met Wiggly Wagga, the wicked gnome. You must take care not to meet Wiggly Wagga. He is about to-day, on the look-out for the unwary traveller.

Wiggly Wagga, the wicked gnome! The two boys had never heard of him before.

"I was taking all mother's eggs up to the big house," said the little girl, nearly choking with grief, and panting out the words with jerks of her chin; "and—and—I was to bring home to mother a quarter in payment for them."

A quarter was like a fortune to her. When she told the two boys about it she broke down entirely, and could say no more, and cried piteously.

Rob looked at Bob, and Bob looked at Rob. Each had put a hand into his pocket. Bob nodded at Rob, and Rob nodded at Bob.

"Look up, little girl—here!" said the boys. "We have just got enough to pay for your eggs." And they gave her between them three dimes.

She was so glad; they had never seen anything like it! And then she told them all about Wiggly Wagga.

He was a little fat man, with a feather in his cap, and had something in his forehead that shone like a star—not really a man but a wicked mischievous gnome.

Her mother had often told her to beware of him, for if he carried anything away belonging to her she would not grow an inch so long as he kept it.

When she met him that morning she had no idea who it was, and he called out, "Beetles! beetles!" and pointed towards her feet; and she was so much afraid of beetles that she jumped away and spilt the eggs out of her basket.

And then he had laughed as if he would split his sides, because there were no beetles at all, and he thought it a great joke.

Her roll of red wool had fallen out of her basket too, and he had run away with it.

"So I'll never, never grow; and I'll be of no use to mother if I am so little always; oh, whatever shall I do!" said the poor little girl sadly.

"Yes, you shall grow!" said Rob.

"We shall catch him!" said Bob.

And away they went together to brave the wicked Wiggly Wagga, and get back the ball of red wool.

They asked everybody they met if they had seen a little stout man with a feather in his cap.

Nobody had seen him, but some country boys had been frightened by seeing queer little men among the yellow gorse bush on the common.

For a moment, Bob and Rob felt their hearts beat! but they went straight to the common.

The birds and butterflies started up out of the clump of flowering gorse; but the boys searched in vain for the little men for a long time.

At last they came to a very remote part of the common, and they heard voices in a deep sandy hollow, hard by the places where they stood.

"Who's afraid?" said Bob!

"Come along!" said Rob.

And so they found the gnomes sitting all around in the sandy hollow.

"Which of you is Wiggly Wagga?" Bob asked.

He was ashamed to hear his own voice sound so weak and trembling, but he could not help it.

"We want—a ball of red wool from him," said Rob, as stoutly as he could; but he hoped Bob did not notice the shakes and pauses in the question.

All the queer little men stood up.

"Wiggly Wagga is not among us," they said. "We were just holding a council together when you found us, to know what we should do to get rid of him; he teases us so. We are his soldiers, but he shall not be the leader of the band any more."

One elderly gnome complained that Wiggly Wagga made him stand on his head for hours together.

Another said the only drill they had was climbing greasy poles and slipping down about fifty times before they got their dinner.

"He is always laughing at us," they said. "He brings spiders from Creepy Crawly Forest, and puts them in our hats: he puts crackers in our shoe to make us jump.

"Which way did he go?" asked Rob and Bob.

"He went down the hole that people call the Gnome's Tunnel," they said. "Come, and if you follow us we will show you the way."

And away they trooped across a field and along a deep cutting that went in among the bushes; deeper and deeper down, with darkness at the end.

Every gnome held the one before him by the coat. Rob held on to the last one of them, and Bob held on to Rob; and so they went down the Gnome's tunnel into the darkness.

"Make for the light and take care you don't fall into the holes," said the gnomes, whisked away from the boys and were gone.

Bob and Rob held fast to each other, and went along sliding their feet cautiously on the ground till they reached an opening like a cavern entrance, and there they got out into a wild grassy place—not like any fields they had ever seen.

Three terrible beasts were feeding there.

"Bulls!" said Rob. "Look at the size of them! How they lash their tails! How fierce they look.

"No, they are pigs," said Rob; "overgrown pigs."

"Overgrown fiddlesticks!" said Rob. "Look at their tusks; just as if bulls' horns were on their noses. And what ears! what eyes!"

"What bristles!" said Rob.

And when one of the beasts looked towards them and put down his head with a grunt as loud as the bellow of a bull, both the boys quaked with fear.

"Don't get behind me like that," said Rob to Bob.

"Then don't get behind me," said Bob.

"Ho! ho! ho! they are frightened!" said a mocking voice near them; and there stood Wiggly Wagga, with the feather in his cap, and the bright something in his forehead that shone like a star, holding a red ball of wool in his hand.

The boys made an effort to be brave then.

"We are not afraid," they said; "at least we shan't be any more," said Bob.

Rob, who was very careful, said:

"I mean we shall go on just the same whether we are or not. Give us that ball of wool at once to take back to the little girl who is crying on the road."

"Oh, what a joke! Take it if you can that is if you catch me," said Wiggly Wagga, laughing at them.

They ran after the gnome, and they nearly caught him, because he was soon quite out of breath.

But suddenly he sprang up on the back of one of the beasts and rode away at full speed.

Bravery comes of effort, you know, and the two boys were becoming more and more brave.

They sprang up on the other two beasts, who were still grazing close by, and away went the two terrible animals full speed, in chase of Wiggly Wagga.

"Are you afraid?" he cried, shouting back at them.

"No, not we," called back the boys as they clung to the strange animals.

"Then we shall go faster still," he called out.

At once the animals began to fly along, turning like wheels, heels over head. In a few moments Bob and Rob fell off.

They were stunned and dizzy; but when they could open their eyes and stand up they found that the gnome and the wild beasts were gone, and were not to be seen, although they looked in all directions, and they were lying on the grass at the edge of a tangled wood.

It was Creepy Crawly Forest, full of spiders, and moths, and crickets, and slugs.

But Bob and Rob made up their minds not to be afraid of anything, so on they went.

A thread of red wool was clinging to the bushes.

They followed this, winding it into a ball as they took it off the trees.

It was caught all along, showing the way Wiggly Wagga had gone, and at the end of the red thread they found the mischievous gnome himself asleep on the grass, with his hat and feather beside him.

Softly they stole away with the ball of thread without waking him.

All the other gnomes met them and cheered them outside the wood, and showed them the way back up the tunnel into the fields they knew.

So they gave the ball of wool back to the poor little girl, and she went home rejoicing; and they were the bravest of brave boys ever after, and thought the pursuit of Wiggly Wagga was a fine holiday adventure—better than any amount of country walks, and cake and milk.

They told all about it to Tommy Tucker and Jack Horner, for Rob and Bob lived long ago, or they could never have chased Wiggly Wagga.

THE DUKE'S CONDESCENSION.—There has never been an instance of "graciousness" like the visit of the Duke de Nivernais, in the seventeenth century, to his dying steward.

Wishing to see how matters stood with the poor fellow, the duke stepped into the room and had the extreme condescension to make personal enquiry into the state of his health.

The steward, utterly bewildered by the honor, raised himself with great difficulty, and said, in a tone of the most abject humility—

"I hope your grace will not be offended at my dying in your presence!"

The duke, deeply touched, answered:

"Not in the least, my good friend; do not mind me."

Whereupon the steward availed himself of the gracious permission of his master and gave up the ghost.

WITH every anguish of our earthly part the spirit's sight grows clearer: this was meant when Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay.

WATCHING.

BY CECIL LORRAINE.

Have you ever look'd in vain, dear,
For a footstep thro' the rain?
Have you listen'd for a voice, dear,
That will never sound again?

Have you gaz'd amid the shadows,
In the dulness of despair,
For a form you love and long for,
For a face no longer there?

Ah! your eyes look into mine, dear,
With a bright, untroubl'd gaze:
You have never mourn'd, my darling,
O'er the joys of other days—

Over vanish'd days of summer—
For your days are always bright,
And no cloud of cruel sorrow
Ever dims your sky's fair light.

But with me 'tis very diff'rent,
I have griefs to bear alone;
I must watch in vain, my darling,
For that voice's thrilling tone.

I must gaze into the shadows,
With a never-resting pain—
I must listen for the footstep
That will never come again!

BEGINNING THE YEAR.

Like the customs of Christmas, which, in their origin, are a curious mixture of poetry and mysticism, of symbolism and superstition, those that belong to the observance of New Year's Day, are also, to a large extent, relics of usages and ideas that date from early heathen ages.

In France, New Year's presents play an important part. The French derive their term for these presents from the Latin word *Strenia*, the name of a goddess whom the Romans venerated as the patroness of gifts. There was a grove in Rome dedicated to this goddess, where it was customary to get fresh twigs, to give as presents to friends and relatives on New Year's Day.

At first the presents only consisted of figs, dates, and honey, which were intended to represent the sweet and pleasant elements of life; but they soon became more valuable and costly. During the sway of the emperors, Roman subjects made New Year's gifts to their sovereign.

Augustus usually received such quantities of these that he had gold and silver statues made of them. Tiberius did away with the usage, because he considered it too troublesome to express thanks for the gifts. Caligula, on the contrary, reintroduced the custom, and even made up for his predecessor's refusal to receive presents by requiring that those that had been offered to him should be given to himself as arrearages.

The custom of making New Year's gifts, notwithstanding attempts to suppress it, was continued after Europe became Christian. For a time present-making was transferred to Easter, but later it was again associated with the first day of January.

At one time, in France, there was great extravagance in the custom. In the reign of Louis XIV., on the first day of January, 1678, Madame de Montespan received a cup of gold, set with emeralds and diamonds, besides two goblets, furnished with covers that were likewise studded with precious stones.

At present gifts most frequently consist in France of sweetmeats tastefully arrayed in handsome boxes, or of vases, bronzes, rare porcelains, or other works of art.

Many interesting customs had their origin in the early days of the German people, with whom the winter solstice was always a festival.

In Voightland, a district of Saxony, maidens are accustomed to walk on New Year's Eve—and they prefer the hour of midnight—in retired nooks of gardens, and shake trees and fence pickets, or even washpoles, and inquire about their future lovers; and from whatever direction they hear the barking or howling of a dog, or any other marked or sudden noise, from that direction will the lover come.

On New Year's, or as it is called, Sylvester Eve, the maiden of Mecklenburg, with her back turned to the door, throws a slipper over head. If the toe of the fallen slipper points to the door, she leaves the house during the following year to go into service; if not, she remains at home.

In the villages near the Vosges mountain range, the well dance was a general custom forty or fifty years ago, and may still be retained in many places.

Early on the morning of New Year's Day, before the ringing of the church bells, the unmarried young women of a village would dance round the running well or fountain of the place, which they had previously adorned with a small fir-tree, and would sing a song to the dance that dated unquestionably, though in distorted form, from a dim antiquity.

The object of this custom was to provide the dancing maidens with lovers during the coming year, and to bring good luck and fortunate crops to the village, and make the water of the well healthful for the cattle.

In Denmark there is a curious custom of breaking bottles, pots, and dishes against the house-door; a custom that is turned to advantage for annoying an enemy, by breaking vessels against his door that are filled with filth; or, if the chance is good, they are even thrown into the house.

It is a popular superstition in Denmark that any person who snuffs out a candle on New Year's Eve dies during the following year.

In Spain, Sylvester Eve is of great importance to the young folks. On that eve, in accordance with an old custom, the names of the young people are thrown into two separate urns, one for each sex.

The names are then drawn alternately, one from each urn, and the young men who participate in the sport become the recognised lovers and escorts during the whole succeeding year of the respective maidens, whom this lottery accords to them.

Should it happen that the same two names are drawn together two years in succession, it is considered an omen favorable to a more lasting relationship, and usually so results.

In European countries, in which the Julian Calendar is still in vogue, the carnival celebration begins always at Christmas, and is conducted in a way quite different from that of Western countries.

The Russian Carnival is divided into two parts—the New Year's celebration, which is conducted with dancing, jesting, and masquerading, and the so-called Butter Week, or festal time that precedes the strict fasts.

The sports, mummeries, jests, and practical jokes that characterized the Roman Saturnalia mark to-day the Russian New Year's celebration.

They still continue in full vogue among the Russian people, notwithstanding the many changes that have been wrought in popular customs in the lapse of the centuries.

For village boys to mask as bears, horses, wolves, and other animals, and go about from house to house on New Year's Eve, accompanied by musicians, and there sing comic songs and dance, especially in imitation of trained dancing bears, is a favorite amusement in the land of the Czars; and peasants and farmers treat these jolly visitors hospitably with beer or liquor, and frequently give them coin.

Grains of Gold.

Activity is not always energy.

The present is the golden moment of life.

Beautiful bubbles are but glittering emptiness.

Teach thy tongue to say, "I do not know."

Loyalty to best convictions is an important duty.

Difficulties are overcome by diligence and assiduity.

It is easy for a man in health to preach patience to the sick.

He that thinks himself the wisest, is generally the greatest fool.

Prosperity is no just scale; adversity is the only balance to weigh friends.

The less tenderness a man has in his nature, the more he requires from others.

Do not ask another to do what you would not be glad to do under similar circumstances.

Do not make witticisms at the expense of others which you would not care to have made upon yourself.

To pray loudly is not a necessity of devotion; when we pray we must direct our hearts toward heaven.

Argument will pull a wise man down to the level of a fool, but it never raises a fool to the plane of a wise man.

Words are spiritual forces, angels of blessing or of cursing: unuttered, we control them; uttered, they control us.

Femininities.

Ask thy purse what thou should'st buy.

When two quarrel, both are in the wrong.

The most welcome visitor is one who knows when to take his leave.

Some people who live in fine houses and pay big rents don't get enough to eat.

Don't tell people how you are; they don't want to know even when they ask.

Japanese rose jars have taken a new lease of popularity among fashionable people.

Too many women of fashion do not know where fashion stops and vulgarity begins.

The oversumptuous drawing rooms of the day are compared to museums by foreigners.

To renew the gloss on rubber shoes put on a thin coating of the best quality asphalt varnish.

A witticism of the day in Paris recently defined a masked ball as "a merciful institution for plain women."

It is in the contract with Queen Victoria's housekeeper that she will not get married for at least ten years.

Ladies should never indulge in anticipation, for we all know how objectionable a woman is who looks forward.

Young Jenks thinks that marriage must be favorable to longevity, as an old maid never lives to be more than 30.

Mrs. Lucy Myers, of St. Louis, would not give up the baby of one of her boarders until the latter had paid her board bill.

An advertisement in a lady's journal reads. "Wanted, good corsets, 19 or less, by a lady reducing her waist. Must be well boned and suited for pulling."

Mistress of the house: "Did you tell the lady I was out, Bilvina?" Bilvina: "Yis, mum." "Did she seem to doubt it?" "No, mum. She said she knew you wasn't."

O love! thy essence is thy purity! Breathe one unhallowed breath upon thy flame and it is gone forever, and but leaves a sullied vase, its pure light lost in shame!

Woman's work is never done. The reason of this is that she engages a servant girl to do it. This may be a trifle obscure, but the germs of eternal truth are in its bosom.

The judicial character is not captivating in females. A woman fascinates a man quite as often by what she overlooks as by what she sees. Love prefers twilight to daylight.

"I hope, my little girl," said a mother one morning, "that you will be able to control your little temper to-day." "Yes, mamma, and I hope you will be able to control your big temper."

A country Cornelia thus maternally addresses her eldest jewel: "My daughter, you are now 15 years of age, engaged to be married, and without a freckle on your face. I have done my duty."

A working women's society in Detroit, formed 10 years ago to take care of girls unemployed and get them work, has so thrived that it recently dedicated a fine building for its purpose.

A lady has been appointed Professor of Woodcarving in a Western college. "Her first labors," says some droll person, "should be to teach the young ladies how to sharpen a lead-pencil."

"Brown, why do you keep following my wife about so?" "Your wife, Smith! How should I know she was your wife? She hasn't said a single word!" "Is that so? Then it isn't my wife!"

It is a singular fact that ladies who know how to preserve everything else, can't preserve their tempers. Yet it may be done on the self-sealing principle. It is only to keep the mouth of the vessel tightly closed.

A California widow had plans made for a $50,000 monument for her late departed, but when the lawyers got through fighting over the estate the widow was doing housework at $2 per week for the man who designed the monument.

A woman wage earner in Maine, to whom a blank was sent by the Labor Bureau, replied to the question, "Are you married, single, or a widow?" as follows: "I have been married, but am now single. I am also a widow." She was divorced.

Single ladies, in general, do not approve the remarriage of widows. A young lady who was approaching the "middle ages" was in the habit of saying, whenever she heard of a widow's marriage: "There, now! that woman has got one of my husbands!"

Maud: "What's Mr. Nicefellow's address, Edith?" Edith: "No. 13 Blank street. Why?" "The rude fellow kissed me last evening, and I ordered him out of the house and told him not to dare enter the door again until I sent for him. Are you sure it's No. 29?"

Do not nag your children when they are happily and safely employed; let them alone, thus saving many an altercation; but when there comes an issue, as there often must, make up your mind what is right and maintain your authority. This is important in teaching them self-control.

The coldest sort of a competition is that to come off among the young women of the Bath Philharmonic Society. They will sing behind a curtain, so that they can not be seen, and the judges will have to vote on the number of the singer. Each will sing one sacred song and an English ballad.

Visitor, in lunatic asylum, a century hence: "What a beautiful girl!" Superintendent: "Yes, poor thing! She was a great society belle once, the pride of one of the most fashionable circles in town. Her parents' hearts are almost broken. It is a pity, a great pity, that so lovely a casket should contain such a diseased mind. She is not dangerous; only a monomaniac, but the case seems hopeless." "What is her mania?" "She wants to marry for love."

Masculinities.

If you would teach secrecy to others begin with yourself.

Every day a life—a blank to be inscribed with gentle thoughts.

It is not legally necessary to say on a note "for value received."

There are some men with just imagination enough to spoil their judgment.

There is nothing like poverty to give one a deep theoretical knowledge of human kindness.

Mr. Softleigh: "What, in your opinion, is the limit to love?" Miss Hardy: "Matrimony."

A country paper says: "There is a man in this city so ugly that with six frowns he can kill a bulldog."

At Cleveland, O., John Fenerstein's sweetheart became a nun, and he has gone crazy on account of it.

There are some kinds of men who cannot pass their time alone; they are the flails of occupied people.

Love's heralds should be thoughts, which ten times faster glide than the sunbeams, driving back shadows over lowering hills.

This world is full of fools, and he who would not wish to see one must not only shut himself up alone, but must also break his looking-glass.

A Western fakir is selling an adjustable engagment ring that can be made to fit any finger. This is something that young men have been waiting for a long time.

Be not too ready to pronounce that what you think a bad youth will necessarily become a bad man. Yonder sturdy oak may have grown from an acorn rejected by a hog!

She: "Do you believe there ever was a case of everlasting constancy?" He: "Yes, a number of them." "Where did they happen?" "Oh, you will find them in books."

Love is exactly like war in this, that a soldier, though he has escaped three weeks complete o' Saturday night, may nevertheless be shot through his heart on Sunday morning.

A man has issued a book of the names of men who don't pay their debts in a certain city. It contains so many names that it is frequently mistaken for, and used in the place of, a city directory.

The latest method. Jones: "I see that Smith has taken to riding a bicycle. What on earth is he doing that for?" Robinson: "Oh, a very simple reason—to prevent Mrs. Smith going with him."

The man who has never tried the companionship of a little child, has carelessly passed by one of the greatest pleasures of life, as one passes a rare flower without plucking it or knowing its value.

There are some mighty mean men in this world. One of them, it is said, has invented a contribution box which registers the amount each person puts in, so that the whole congregation can see it.

Young Robinson, waiting for Miss Clara: "And so your sister expected me to call this evening, did she, Bobby?" Bobby: "Yes, I believe she did. I heard her tell ma that she had set the clock an hour ahead."

He, trying to play a trump card: "As I passed your house last evening I thought I heard an angel sing." She, stiffly: "I was at the theatre last evening. Mrs. Mulhooly and her twins were at our house visiting the cook."

Wife: "What are you reading, John?" Husband: "A story about a fellow who's trying to get a divorce." "Does he get it?" "I haven't got that far yet, but I guess he does. The case is called 'Triumph of the Right.'"

Mrs. Hobson, discussing an amateur theatrical entertainment: "It struck me, Mr. Oldboy, that Mr. Smith's Romeo was a very tame affair." Mr. Oldboy: "Necessarily so, my dear madam; Mrs. Smith played Juliet, you know."

A clothes wringer was the rather odd present which a Jersey City young man made to his best girl. The pair afterwards squabbled, and he demanded the return of the wringer and two other presents, but the girl refuses to give them up.

When the young man calls upon his girl now, he knows by her ill-concealed confusion that he is soon to be made the recipient of an elegantly embroidered smoking jacket that will be sure to fit—somebody else a great deal better than it will him.

Mrs. Smith: "I wonder why your friend Jones married that grabbing Widow Brown?" Mr. Smith. "She is a woman of ability." "Fiddlesticks! In what does she show ability?" "She can mind a great many people's business besides her own."

A Scotch lassie objected to her lover's smoking, and said to him: "Choose between your cigar and me." He promptly chose the weed, and the girl sued him for breach of promise. The court held that by offering the alternative she was responsible for the broken engagement.

Two persons, contending very sharply on matters regarding a late election, got to rather high words, when one of them said, "You never catch a lie coming out of my mouth." The other replied, "You may well say that, for they fly out so fast that nobody can catch 'em."

Capital punishment has been abolished in Italy. This was done in Switzerland some seven years ago, but the result was not regarded as satisfactory, and capital punishment was again re-enacted. It is curious that it should now be abandoned in Italy, where the murder rate is the highest in Europe.

A Western man came to see Longfellow's house, which had been General Washington's headquarters during the War of Independence, and when he was taking leave of the venerable poet, who had most courteously shown him over the place, shook hands and said: "Well, good-bye, General; I am proud to see you looking so hale at your advanced age."

Recent Book Issues.

"Pickett or Pettigrew," is a pamphlet relating to the fight at Gettysberg. It can be had of Hall and Sledge, Weldon, N. C. Price 25 cents.

C. C. Blake, of Topeka, Kansas, has issued in neat and cheap form his "Weather Predictions" for 1889. The curious can find out how far he is right by sending for the book.

"Winchell's First Steps in Reading," in four parts. Part first, by Martha A. Pease; 32 pages. Price 10 cents. Published by S. R. Winchell & Co., Chicago. The author is a practical teacher; we recommend the little book as a most excellent one in our opinion for its purpose.

"Thinks," by Bill Nye. Read or heard, under all circumstances, Bill Nye is entertaining; in this pretty little volume he is surpassing funny. And the beauty of it is, it is all good fun—fun that makes one laugh and feel in a good humor with himself and every one else. Paper, 25 cents. The Dearborn Publishing Company, Chicago.

"Counter Currents," by the author of "Justus," is a well conceived and interesting story, strong in plot, spirited in style, and with a pleasing unconventionality in the telling that is refreshing to the jaded novel reader who feels obliged to feed his mind on fiction. The book is bright vigorous and wholly entertaining, and may be commended wholly as an admirable story. Published by Messrs. Roberts Brothers, Boston.

"Miss Maria Parloa's New Cook Book" is one of the best manuals of the kind ever printed. It has one grace, which many lack—that of explicit directions For comprehensiveness and precision this book may be said to be unique. It contains in addition to matter in other volumes, many hundred fresh recipes and a large description of kitchen utensils and methods of selecting and preparing food. It is a most excellent book for the kitchen. Estes & Lauriat, Boston, publishers.

The latest volume which Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, have issued in their library edition of the works of Walter Besant and James Rice is "Twas in Trafalgar Bay," and other stories. This volume contains, besides the story which gives it its name, three other short entertaining stories. "Shepherd All and Maiden Fair;" "Such a Good Man," and "Le Chien D'Or." The tasteful get-up of these books makes them one of the most attractive editions of any novelist that has been issued for library use this year. For sale by Lippincott & Co.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The English Illustrated Magazine has a double number for December, in honor of Christmas, and a very interesting and handsome number it is. Its table of contents is especially attractive. It has a story by W. E. Norris, entitled "La Belle Americaine;" an article on "Surrey Farm House," by Grant Allen, which is very profusely illustrated; "A Ramble Through Normandy," also fully illustrated, is by R. Owen Allsop; installments of Crawford's "Saint' Isario," and of S. J. Weyman's "The House of the Wolf;" several poems and miscellaneous articles. Among the latter is "Macbeth on the Stage," by W. Archer and Robert W. Lowe, which is illustrated by pictures of Booth in the title role, and Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth. Macmillan & Co., publishers, New York.

The Quiver for January, which begins a new volume, opens with a capital account of "The Music of the Protestant Reformation," by J. F. Rowbotham. "The Sheep of the Lord" is by Rev. Harry Jones, M. A., honorary chaplain to her majesty Queen Victoria. Prof. Church's thrilling papers entitled "To the Lions," are continued. The Rev. Newman Hall finds "Perfect Through Suffering," a fruitful subject for his pen. An article of special interest is the one called "With Dr. W. M. Taylor in New York. The Rev. Wm. M. Johnston discusses the subject of "Life's Lonely Pilgrimage," while Anne Beale writes on that always absorbing subject, "Finding Employment for Women." The venerable Archdeacon Gore discourses on "The Writings of St. John." There are other papers of a more or less theological nature, and there are good stories, long and short. *The Quiver* continues to be the most popular magazine of Sunday reading. Cassell & Co., publishers New York.

Cassell's Family Magazine always astonishes us by the amount of good reading and good pictures it gives for a very small price. Take this January number for example. There is a beautiful frontispiece. Then there is the beginning of a capitally illustrated serial, 'Under a Strange Mask." Then there is a pertinent little paper on "Presidents and President Making." Following this comes an amusing and instructive paper on "The Art of Dramatic Recitation," with descriptive cuts. Our old and valued friend, the Family Doctor, falls easily into line, and discusses "Nursery Accidents." After this practical paper comes a bit of fiction called "Dobson's Riots," and a bit of fact descriptive of "The Manchester Ship Canal." A paper that every one will read is one containing "Matrimonial Maxims by a Married Man," by Prof. J. Stuart Blackie. There are other interesting papers, besides poetry and fiction, the two admirable fashion letters and a 'Gatherer,' replete with valuable information. Cassell & Co., publishers, New York.

For delicacy, for purity, and for improvement of the complexion nothing equals Pozzoni's Powder.

ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS.

On the subject of animal friendships a late writer says: Two Scotch terriers are lying before the fire. Prince is an amiable sort of dog; Jack is rather surly; both good vermin-killers and fond of hunting. I bring in a common buck rabbit, and place it beside the dogs, with the intimation they were not to touch it.

Trust, and then alliance, quickly grew between it and Prince, whilst Jack shows unmistakable hatred.

In a few days the two friends, with their paws absurdly clasping each other's necks, sleep happily on the rug; they play together, they chase each other up and down the stairs and all over the house at full speed, and when tired come back to the rug.

Jack, refusing all this sort of thing, makes the rabbit look at him with a sort of awe.

After a while, being very fond of Bunny, we put on the floor a pretty pink-eyed doe as a present. He stares, sniffs her all over, kills her on the spot, and goes for a romp with his dear Prince.

Jack always sleeps under my bed from choice, and just before I put out the light as I lie, stands up against the bed for his last pat and "good-night."

Bunny has observed all this, and quietly creeps into the room, which he refuses to leave; then likewise always asks for his "good-night," and sleeps somewhere near his great "ideal."

I punished my cat for killing a chicken. The next day he is seen to carry a live chicken in his mouth and lay it down to the hen he had previously robbed.

He and the chicken afterwards were frequently observed leaving the orchard together, and traveling through the courtyard and back passages, to find their way to the kitchen fireplace, where they would sleep in good-fellowship.

This chicken, I discovered, had been stolen nearly two miles away. It is important to remark that the cat, though a cruel bird-killer, never touched another chicken. Was the idea of compensation in the cat's mind?

If not that, all the circumstances are singularly coincident. And why did the chicken prefer the cat's companionship to that of its fellows?

STEAM AND COAL-OIL.—It looks as if steam were about to be superseded as a means of propulsion—at least for small boats and engines working up to a small horse power only.

An Englishman has invented a system by which he uses spirit instead of water, and petroleum instead of coal. The advantage of the change is obvious, when it is borne in mind that spirit volatilizes at a much lower temperature than water, and that it is much easier to obtain petroleum than to get such coal as is best suited for burning in engine boilers.

The spirit is not consumed; but, after having been vaporised and used in the engine cylinder, is recondensed, and used over and over again. He employs any kind of spirit, and he tells me that he has used even whisky and gin.

With about a gallon of methylated spirit and nine gallons of petroleum—costing altogether, say, two dollars—he can drive a 30-ft. launch thirty-six miles in six hours or less, with a dozen passengers on board. The cost of the next thirty-six mile trip would not much exceed one dollar; for the only way in which the spirit is lost is by leakage; and, in well-made engines, the leakage should be very small. The invention seems to me to be a very important one.

OLD BOOTS AND SHOES.—Old boots and shoes have commercial value. After they are collected from the ash barrels and boxes they are ripped open, and the leather is subjected to a treatment which renders it a pliable mass, from which a kind of artistic leather is derived.

In this country patterns are stamped on this, while in France it is used to cover trunks and boxes. In France, old boots and shoes are also converted into new ones.

They are taken to pieces, the nails being all removed, and the leather soaked in water to soften it. The uppers for children's shoes are then cut from it. The soles are also used, for from the smaller pieces of the leather of the old soles the so-called Louis XV. heels for ladies' shoes are made from the larger and thinner pieces by means of magnets, the nails, tacks and braids are separated and then sold. The scraps have also their value, for they are sold to specialists for agricultural purposes. The leather is also used in the manufacture of Prussian blue.

A HANDFUL OF USEFUL RECEIPTS.—To remove freckles, cut them out with a razor, and throw them away. To bring out a moustache, tie it to a strong cord, twenty feet long, to the end of which attach a heavy weight, and throw the latter from a fourth-story window. To get rid of red hair, hold your head for a few moments in a strong blaze of gas. To preserve your eyes, put them in a bottle filled with alcohol. To avoid corpulence, leave off eating. To conceal your teeth, keep your mouth shut. To keep out of debt, acquire the reputation of a rascal, and no one will trust you.

A certain means of happiness is to keep Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup in every family.

For headache, toothache, earache, and backache Salvation Oil is a certain cure.

HADN'T BEEN INTRODUCED.—Edward Livingstone was in his day a great lawyer and diplomatist. While he lived in New Orleans and, indeed, throughout his life, he was accustomed to take long, solitary walks.

One day he came home completely wet through to the alarm of his family, one of whom exclaimed:

"Why you look as if you have just come out of the river!"

"And so I have," answered Mr. Livingstone laughing.

Walking along the river bank he had amused himself watching the progress of a canoe, in which a man was crossing the river. Suddenly the canoe pitched to one side, and the occupant fell into the water. His motions immediately showed that he could not swim.

"I threw off my coat," said Mr. Livingstone, "jumped in, got hold of the man just as he appeared to be sinking, and brought him to the boat, which was righted. He seized the side, clambered in, and rode off without looking at me, and I was left to find the shore as best I could, which, loaded as I was with clothes and boots, was no easy matter."

Mr. Livingstone's explanation of this strange conduct was that probably the rescued man did not think it proper to speak to a person to whom he had never been properly introduced.

SLEEP-WALKING.—A few evenings ago, according to a Boston paper, a student at the Institute of Technology in the city, who was ill with delirious fever, fell asleep in his room at a house on Tremont st. Suddenly he was awakened by something striking him on the head, and greatly to his surprise, he discovered that he was in a strange house groping about the hallway in his night robe. He heard voices, which he recognized as those of his friends, and, rapping at the door, he was admitted to the room of two fellow-students.

They were much surprised, for they supposed at that moment that the visitor was lying sick six houses away in the same block. He said that he remembered going to sleep, but he knew nothing more. They clothed him and escorted him home. They then found a solution of the mystery.

In his sleep he had arisen, and through the window made his escape to the roof, a mansard, edged by a tin gutter, six stories from the sidewalk. Thence along the edge of the roof, balancing himself skilfully, he made his way past the dormer windows of five houses and paused at the top.

Here he found a window opened at the top, he lowered the sash still farther and climbed in. At the time the room was vacant, and the delirious sleeper made his way through it to the hall, where he struck his head against a door and awoke.

SALUTATIONS IN MEXICO.—Mexican salutations are extremely cordial. Men fall into each other's arms and remain thus for several minutes, patting each other on the shoulder and indulging in all sorts of epithets.

Another salutation, even between friends of the opposite sex, is thus described:

"In the quickest, most spirited manner the arms of both parties are outstretched, they rush together for a second, their breasts barely touch, while the observer is watching for a kiss to follow this ardent salute, they separate, and all is finished. The extreme frankness accompaning it compels one to admire the custom, for it means no more than hand shaking among us." If friends meet as often as twenty times a day they must stop to shake hands.

In the capital one day there were seen two splendid carriages, each one occupied by a man. The carriages halted, both men alighted, removed hats, shook hands, embraced, talked for a few moments, again embraced, shook hands, bowed, took off their hats, and each entered their carriage and went his way.

The formal salutation which is usual between women is a tap of the right hand on the left shoulder, and then a generous shake of the hand. Women who are intimate friends not only tap the shoulder, but lay their cheeks softly together for an instant.

At one of the stations on the Chicago and North-Western Railway recently, an anxious inquirer came up to the door of the baggage-car, and said, "Is there anything for me?" After some search among boxes and trunks, the baggage-man rolled out a keg of whiskey. "Anything more?" asked the wet grocer. "Yes, there's a gravestone that goes with that liquor." The countenance of the grocer assumed a wrathy appearance, and the car-door was shut with a slam.

SIGNS AND PORTENTS.—English shoemakers always cut a V in the bench leather for luck. Swedish carpenters mark a cross on their tools for the same purpose, and many painters make a cross and a triangle on a high scaffolding before they feel perfectly comfortable upon it.

Too many have no idea of the subjection of their temper to the influence of religion, and yet what is changed, if the temper is not? If a man is as passionate, malicious, resentful, sullen, moody, or morose after his conversion as before it, what is he converted from or to?

WEAK LUNGS OR THROATS are severely tried by our rough, wintry weather, and call for prompt treatment, whenever attacked. Dr. Jayne's Expectorant is an old, well-tried medicine for all Bronchial or Pulmonary Affections, and is sure to cure your Cold and heal inflamed parts.

A DECEPTIVE PROBLEM.—A problem that at a glance seems easy enough to tempt many a schoolboy to spend a portion of his vacation in an endeavor to solve it, appeared recently in a Maine journal, and is as follows:

Take the number 15. Now multiply 225 by itself. Then multiply that product by itself, and so on until 15 products have been multiplied by themselves in turn.

The question aroused considerable interest among lawyers in Portland, and their best mathematician, after struggling with the problem long enough to see how much labor was entailed in the solution, made the following discouraging report upon it:

The final product called for contains 38,539 figures (the first of which are 1412). Allowing three figures to an inch, the answer would be over 1070 feet long. To perform the operation would require about 500 000 000 figures.

If they can be made at the rate of 100 a minute, a person working 10 hours a day for 300 days in each year would be 28 years about it. If, in multiplying, he should make a row of ciphers, as he does in other figures, the number of figures used would be more than 523 939,228.

That would be the precise number of figures used if the product of the left-hand figure in each multiplicand by each figure of the multiplier was always a single figure; but, as it is most frequently, and yet not always, two figures, the method employed to obtain the foregoing result cannot be accurately applied. Assuming that the cipher is used on an average once in ten times, 475 000 000 figures is a close approximation to the actual number.

JAPANESE POLITENESS.—The men in Japan are always excessively polite to one another. They bend their backs and bow their heads, and put their two hands back to back between their knees and have a great time.

But the most amusing thing is to see two old ladies in Japan meeting one another in the street. The street is empty, we'll say, and they catch sight of each other a short distance apart. They immediately begin to make obeisance at each other, and they keep bending and bowing at short intervals until they come together, when they make a peculiar hiss by drawing in the breath and keep on saying "Ohayo" for about two minutes.

The young people, the "Moos-mais," are very charming and graceful in their greeting of each other, but the old ladies are ornate and elaborate in their address.

Wanamaker's.

PHILADELPHIA, December 24 1888.

IT WOULD BE HARD NOT TO FALL IN LOVE WITH the store now under 1 new conditions. There is certainly room for 10 000 more persons. See if you don't think so when you look at the straighter and wider, the broadened, easy-going stairways, the spaces given to customers for elbow room, or to wait for elevators, or to see things.

The store has a sight, that's a fact; working up to-day to its full capacity; "a great and interesting occasion," as the newspaper reporters would put it.

The life of a year of preparation blooms out in these few days. We have but little to say about it, as what we are doing day by day is what we are in business for; keeping the best of the best goods and serving our customers in the best of the best ways. There is no need of being ashamed of this kind of storekeeping. And people will surely find out in the course of time the value of services such as these—even without so much newspaper silver lining.

FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH WE WILL SELL AT One Dollar a yard the best 24-inch Black Gros grain Silk we ever offered at that price. We never heard of this Silk under $1 25; we don't expect to hear of it again after this for years.

HAND-RUN LACE FICHUS THAT WERE $2 50 AND $3 last season are $1 50 now. Other grades up to $25 as far your way.

So are hand run Scarfs and machine-made Scarfs and Fichus, and most of the other Laces.

$1 50 and $2 real Breton Lace Handkerchiefs for $1 and $1 25.

BOOK NEWS FOR DECEMBER, 112 PAGES, handsomely illustrated, 5c., 50c a year. The best Journal of current literature published in this country. Holiday Catalogue free. With either or both and the Post-office you can buy from a distance.

If you are near-by, it is better to buy in person.

JOHN WANAMAKER.

GOOD SENSE CORSET WAISTS FERRIS' Pat.

Ring Buckle at Hip for Hose Supporters.
Tape-fastened Buttons
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Best Materials throughout.
FIT ALL ages.

BEST for Health, Comfort, Wear, and Finish.

Children .50 .70 .75
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Buttons FRONT instead of Clasps.

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341 Broadway, N. Y.
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FOR SALE BY ALL LEADING CORSET AND DRY GOODS STORES IN PHILADELPHIA.

Humorous.

VALLEY AND MOUNT.

There was once a small, respectable mount,
That considered itself a wonder;
The sea it imagined of no account,
And it kindly smiled at the thunder.

It would laugh to itself and softly say,
"Those clouds, in the distance looming,
Remind me of smoke-flowers, light and gay,
Round the pipe of some Dutchman blooming.

"The stars are a handful of third-rate gems,
And the blue sky is only a flagon;
The forest's a tangle of whirling stems,
And the moon's the wheel of a wagon.

"The moon and the sun a chance afford
For the game of philopena;
And the grandest cyclone that ever roared
Is a petulant concertina.

"But I—I am sure, I am wildly grand;
I'm majestic, and I'm stately;
My sublimity well I understand,
And enjoy my greatness greatly."

And then a low, self-satisfied laugh
From the mountain began to sally—
When an earthquake suddenly split it in half
And turned it into a valley.

—U. N. None.

Galley slaves—Type setters.

The woman question—Is he rich?

The "raw material"—Underdone steak.

The Minister of the Interior—The mouth.

How to make a fire hot—Keep it coaled.

Steady work — Walking on the tight-rope.

An actor ought to be a happy man; his work is all play.

Query: Can a man who dies from excess of joy be said to die a happy death?

An advocate of capital punishment argues that the gallows is calculated to elevate mankind.

"What is pride, my son?"—"Walking with a cane when you ain't lame," replied the intelligent boy.

Water is so scarce in Madison, Indiana, that the people don't think of using it as a beverage. It is even reported that the milkmen have been compelled to sell pure milk, as a matter of economy.

An old stager was compelled by his worthy spouse to join the "cold water army," promising never to touch a drop of anything else except in sickness. He has never been well since.

"I don't think I can see to shave without a light," said Mr. Quilp to Mrs. Quilp the other morning. "Oh, ha!" she replied, "I should think your face was plain enough to be seen anywhere."

A lady who had quarreled with her bald headed lover said, in dismissing him: "What is delightful about you, my friend, is that I have not the trouble of sending you back any locks of hair."

"Talk of mothers-in law and sons-in-law not agreeing," remarked Titmarsh; "my mother-in-law and I agree. She says I ought not to have married her daughter, and I coincide with her."

An old lady, who lost her purse a short time since, declared, on its being restored to her, that she would not attempt to interfere with the reward which was stored up in heaven for the finder, by offering him money.

An old bachelor says that giving the ballot to women would not amount to anything practically, because they would keep denying that they were old enough to vote until they got too old to take any interest in politics.

A man who had been arrested as a vagrant, protested that he had a regular trade and calling. To-wit, smoking glass for total eclipses of the sun; and as these occur but a few times in a century, he was not to blame for being out of employment a good deal.

Husband: "If I were to lose you, I would never be such a fool as to marry again." Wife: "If I were to lose you I would marry again directly." Husband: "My death would be regretted by at least one person." Wife: "By whom?" Husband: "My successor."

"I sympathize sincerely with your grief," said a French lady to a recently widowed friend, "to lose such a husband as yours." "Ah, yes, he was very good; and, then, you see, such a misfortune is always great, for one knows what kind of a husband she has lost but cannot tell what kind of a man one will find to succeed him."

"O mother!" cried a Camden youngster, who had been visiting an elder brother in school, "I learned lots to-day!" "What was one thing you learned?" asked the fond parent. "I learned in the 'rithmetic class," was the reply, "that the square of the base and perpendicular of a right-handled triangle is equal to the sum of the hippopotamus."

A patent medicine vendor in a country village was dilating to a crowd upon the wonderful efficiency of his iron bitters. "Why," said he, "Steve Jenkins had only taken the bitters one week when he was shoved in'o prison for murder, and what does Steve do but open a v in in his arm and take iron enough out of his blood to make a crowbar, with which he pried the doors open and let himself out. Fact!"

A paper is going the rounds about a girl dying from tight-lacing. An editor, commenting on the fact, says: "These corsets should be done away with, and if the girls can't live without being squeezed, we suppose men can be found who would sacrifice themselves. As old as we are, we would rather devote three hours a day, without a farthing of pay, as a prevel corset, than see these girls dying off in that manner. Office hours almost any time."

HEAVY THINKING.—What is the weight of a thought? The question at first sight may look an absurd one; yet it has been proven that thoughts have weight.

The amount of blood in the brain varies in proportion to the nature of the mental action that is going on there; an Italian physiologist, Professor Mosso, has recently constructed a large balance in which he can poise a human body in a horizontal position, and can find out exactly how much blood is in the subject's brain in a given moment.

Thoughts, or dreams, or the effect of a slight sound during slumber turned the blood to the brain sufficiently to sink the head below the level of the feet. Signor Mosso's balance even enabled him to tell when the friend with whom he was experimenting was reading Italian and when Greek. The greater mental effort required for reading a foreign language sank down the head to a percept ble extent.

It is proposed to utilize this discovery in criminal cases. It is thought that although a culprit might avoid any outward manifestations of a guilty conscience, his inmost feelings would be of so violent a nature that, under examination the abnormal flow of the blood to the head would betray him.

Perhaps it is not altogether to be regretted that this process of inquisition will not harmonize with the methods of our law.

HARMONY OF COLOR.—In deciding the color of a new dress there are concords and dissonances, and what may be termed indifferentism of shades, one or the other of these qualities being apparent when any two approach each other. Thus, when an orange and crimson appear together, or yellow and red, blue should be introduced; nor will blue and red consort well unless yellow is introduced. Blue agrees with scarlet, salmon color, orange, chocolate, stone color, drab, green, chestnut, purple, and is also in concord with white and black.

Among disagreeable unions are purple with either lilac, slate color, brown, stone color, gray, pink, peach and chestnut; scarlet, with brown, green, purple, pink, gray, drab and stone color; blue with pink, peach gray, green, blue and purple, orange with lilac, brown, drab, gray and chestnut; yellow with red, purple, scarlet, gray and lilac; red with green, blue-green, pink, buff, and chestnut.

A RELIGIOUS paper tells us that a young lady went into Dr. Cooper's study and asked him to give her $2 toward buying her wedding clothes. The cause of wonder is that more do not make such beggars of themselves. The young lady had, very likely, been trained from childhood, in Sunday school, it may be, to beg for "good objects," and she naturally thought her marrying was a "good object," and therefore one suitable for begging.

A MAN is seldom more manly than when he is what you call unmanned—the source of his emotion is championship, pity and courage; the instinctive desire to cherish those who are innocent and unhappy, and defend those who are tender and weak.

RUPTURE.—Dr. J. B. Mayer, 831 Arch St., Philadelphia, has cured my grandson of a bad rupture after six doctors pronounced him incurable. Mrs. L. A. Hamilton, 211 Franklin St., Phila.

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WOMEN AND MICE.

The reason why a woman is afraid of a mouse is a profound mystery—indeed, it has never been very closely proven that she is. But some women are constantly in such a nervous, irritable condition that the slightest thing annoys and startles them. The cause of this unfortunate state of affairs is usually some functional derangement; some distressing or painful irregularity, some derangement or peculiar weakness incident to her sex; or, it may be due to inflammation, ulceration or displacement, of some of the pelvic viscera, or to other organic lesions peculiar to her sex. From whichever cause it may arise, Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is a *positive remedy*, so certain in its curative results that its manufacturers sell it, through druggists, under a *guarantee* of its giving satisfaction in every case, or money paid for it will be *promptly refunded*. As a soothing and strengthening nervine, "Favorite Prescription" is unequaled and is invaluable in allaying and subduing nervous excitability, irritability, exhaustion, prostration, hysteria, spasms and other distressing, nervous symptoms commonly attendant upon functional and organic disease of the womb. It induces refreshing sleep and relieves mental anxiety and despondency.

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Instructions to enable Ladies and Gentlemen to measure their own heads with accuracy:

FOR WIGS, INCHES.	TOUPEES AND SCALPS, INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.	No. 1. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck.	No. 2. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.	No. 3. Over the crown of the head.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.	

They have always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frizettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

Dollard's Herbanium Extract for the Hair.

This preparation has been manufactured and sold at Dollard's for the past fifty years, and its merits are such that, while it has never yet been advertised, the demand for it keeps steadily increasing.

Also **Dollard's Regenerative Cream,** to be used in conjunction with the Herbanium when the Hair is naturally dry and needs an oil.

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Yours truly, W. H. WANAMAKER.

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GENTLEMEN'S HAIR CUTTING AND SHAVING.
LADIES' AND CHILDREN'S HAIR CUTTING.

None but Practical Male and Female Artists Employed.

Latest Fashion Phases.

Cloth is the favorite material for day dresses, plain in color and with a smooth surface, and, if the tint be well chosen, it is most durable wear.

A dark sage-green costume has been made up with long draperies; on one side of the skirt was a double row of Lapland fox with visible white hairs intermixed with black, the fur united by large bows of black moire ribbon; beyond this was a finely braided panel of the fashionable class of braiding which has the appearance of Spanish braid and silk.

In this dress another panel of the same braiding was introduced on the opposite side, and a wide black moire sash fell at the back, which hung quite straight and full. The bodice was of the habit shape, with a front waistcoat of braiding.

A French beige dress of light fawn color was perhaps more original. The petticoat was arranged in simple pleats, and made entirely of plain light gray cloth; over this came the beige color, the back of the bodice slightly fulled in the centre, but cut without a seam. The bodice was also full in front, and cut in one with the silk drapery, but elaborately trimmed with a silk cord galon, in which the gray and beige were prettily blended.

This went around the waist like a girdle, with narrow straps of the material over; it formed almost a yoke at the neck, and bordered the diagonal opening, which very skilfully showed a glimpse of a gray vest. The polonaise was lined throughout with French-gray, which peeped in everywhere unawares.

This is just one of those dresses in perfect style which follow, nevertheless, none of the lines that Dame Fashion seems to have set for herself this season. Gray and fawn is a curious combination, but in this case it was a most successful one.

A black and red dress was also quite removed from the ordinary style. It was made in soft woolen stuff; the petticoat red; the overdress black, lined with red, which at one side was caught up to the waist, showing the lining, and much elaborate ornamentation of black passementeries.

A cascade of red lined with black fell from the waist on one side; and the bodice was black, with red facings. The skirt was short and full, the drapery ample.

Short dresses are worn for outdoors; skirts that just touch the ground, for indoors, and only trained gowns for ceremonious occasions, even in the evening, would seem to be the rule.

A good instance of the long dress was a beautiful dinner-gown; the back mousse velvet, the richest tone of moss-green, with a brown tinge, therein. It was made full and flowing, and lined throughout with pink. The petticoat was pink poult de soie, bordered with a narrow triple flounce in box-plaits, fringed at the edge.

This was draped with a deep scarf of cream Algerienne gauze, with horizontal silk stripes at wide intervals, narrow in themselves and of Oriental coloring. At the edge it was elaborately fringed with tassels combining all the colors, and at the waist was a wide pink silk sash, pleated and forming almost a double skirt; the ends, fringed, fell on one side. The low bodice was of velvet, trimmed with cream over pink.

A coat of terra-cotta voile faconne, in red and brown, the pattern cashmerienne and well-covering, had a front of plain silk with appliques of gold pines, the same appearing on the sleeves and vest.

Some of the faced cloths have borders, and one of these of a slate tone had a bordering in two darker shades; the skirt was kilt-pleated, the over-drapery turning up in an acute angle on one side. The jacket bodice had no apparent fastening, was bound round with braid, showed a vest covered with close rows of gray and silver braid.

A green Directoire coat had been made with a stripe of green velvet down the centre of back, a tan waistcoat and braided panels.

A cream dinner gown was made much in the same fashion, braided in gold. Reds and browns are the decided colors of the season. Striped vicuna is much worn, and a large choice of woolens, with printed designs, used for tea jackets and dressing gown. In black silk the small brocades find most favor. They look best for coats, and for evening they are draped with crepe de Chine.

The tea gowns have many new points. One, with a Watteau pleat and velvet revers, extending on either side from the neck to the hem, is made with a full bag front reaching to the waist, where it is caught together with a bow, met by flounces and cascades of lace.

Another, in two distinct colorings, show some pretty pointed smocking at the throat; a loose girdle about the waist; the sleeves being new and distinctive.

A handsome black tea gown had a gold and white draped front, the fulness confined by a pointed belt of velvet, the collar standing up, the sleeves, long and hanging from the elbow, being slashed inside the arm, and filled in with gold.

Another innovation was in a red tea-gown, with soft white fronts, which crossed each other. The red outer robe was bordered with fur, and a strip of fur encircled the elbow of the long tight sleeve, reaching to the waist.

Some of the novelties in tea gowns were, however, still more on the original order.

The cote-hardi of the Middle Ages had been called into play; a perfectly plain close-fitting bodice reached to the hips where it was outlined with a girdle; there was a square trimming of gold embroidery at the neck, and a lace ruff at the back, the front of the skirt, made plain, matched the bodice, and over this came a loose dress bordered in front with fur revers; the gold embroidery edged the hem without fur; the hanging bell sleeves were also edged with fur.

Another style had a loose classic bodice, opening heart-shaped, a gold girdle about the waist, the ends falling in front over the plain skirt, the overdress long, of distinctive color, bordered with gold, the long-hanging sleeves falling to the knee, being cut open from the shoulder, where they show the ruffled under-sleeve matching the underdress.

Quite a distinct style was fastened like a plaid, with a brooch on one shoulder, falling in easy folds slightly pointed at the waist, and matching the Watteau like back; the short underskirt quite distinct in style and pattern, the sleeve was formed with a lace frill to the elbow, and then a puff to the wrist.

Most of the wedding gowns have distinct trains, with bouillonnes or ruches at the hem of the skirt, over which the lace is draped with flowers, or with panels or in rounded vandykes.

The bodice opens sometimes to one side, to which the trimming is entirely confined sometimes diagonally, while others are trimmed plastron-wise. There is always a peculiar scope in bridal gowns.

The choice of coats for ordinary and full-dress morning wear, is great. They open entirely in front to show a wide sash, or they fasten with double buttons or open the entire length of the skirt and bodice, showing revers of brocades.

Dark cloth gowns are being made with a couple of red panels at the side and a red waistcoat; others, again, fall in soft folds in front, and show embroidered panels and waistcoats; others draped over striped petticoats, one revers on the bodice discovering the same stripe.

The full-dress waistcoats introduced into dark dresses in a rounded form are new and pretty, and the loose-fronted jacket bodices are well-cut and smart-looking.

A novel treatment is some passementerie introduced down the front of the gown, which is made to fasten with a couple of battlements in front, and has a couple of pockets with the same treatment at the side. Dark green and beige are most happily combined, the tan forming the under-skirt and panels.

Odds and Ends.

ABOUT OLD JEWELRY.

France of one hundred years ago had shaken off the nightmare of the "reign of terror." A reaction had set in. Many persons seemed to go madly gay when the dread shadow was lifted which had dodged their lives so long.

The reappearance of jewels is noted in 1797 by one author in the vivid account he gives of those early days of the Directoire period.

"Watch chains of mixed diamonds and pearls are worn on every side," he says; and he notes with approbation the conduct of the poor, who, lacking bread, gaze at the jewels exhibited in the shop windows, and respect the thin partition of glass which separates them from the costly spoil.

The newspapers at this time begin to devote some space to chronicling the fashions and jewels that are in favor with the Incroyables and Merveilleuses—the pins, the earrings, the girdles, the necklaces that are worn. A taste for classic garments distinguished the ladies of that day, and the fashion of their jewels partook of the craze for the antique.

The extraordinary transparency and scantiness of the ladies' draperies in the early days of the Directoire is a matter at which to marvel. In vain doctors thundered against apparel little fitted to meet the requirements of the French climate, the immodest fashion continued to hold its sway.

We hear of strange ornaments belonging to those days.

At one of Frascati's famous balls, Mme. Tallien's gold garters gleamed through the diaphanous texture of her dress; rings ornamented every toe of her stockingless feet shod in purple sandals.

Les Merveilleuses, he tells us, wandered in public gardens during the summer clad in pink silk knickerbockers, and a single transparent white garment, through which was visible the flame of diamond bands encircling their thighs, and clasped above their knees.

The influence of travelers through France helped to check the license of fashion which had begun to arouse the indignation of the sobered French folks.

Arms still remained bare, but the bust was covered. Black bracelets studded with diamonds became fashionable. Watches were all the rage; enamelled watches suspended from gold or jeweled chains were worn.

A sentimental vein distinctly marks the period, and finds expression in the manufacture of hair jewlery. The locks of departed friends are braided and twisted into every sort of personal ornament.

"There never was," said Mme. de Genlis, "an age so sentimental as ours; bracelets, rings, initials, charms, and girdles made of hair. Our grandfathers and grandmothers understood nothing of this touching prodigality of hair."

The Directoire merged into the Consulat, and fashions under the leadership of Josephine became more graceful and brilliant. The charming wife of Bonaparte had a perfect taste in dress, and spent money with a lavish hand. She had a passion for jewelry, for pearls and diamonds above all others.

She bought over $20,000 of pearls, and on gala occasions always appeared wearing a profusion of gems. She possessed wreaths, diadems, bands of diamonds. Jewels shone in her hair, round her throat, her waist and in her ears.

Mme. de Remusat describes Josephine on one occasion, when she was still plain Mme. Bonaparte, standing in the Invalides by her husband's side, in full daylight, clad in pale pink net, scintillating with gold and silver stars, her hair wreathed with ears of corn, wrought in diamonds. This headdress of diamond ears of corn was a favorite diadem with Josephine and the ladies of the court therefore adopted the fashion.

Diadems of diamonds or of other precious stones, high combs, incrusted with gems, standing upright on the head, were brought in by Josephine and her daughter Hortense.

The illustrious author Kotzebue, describing the dress of the fashionable women at the dawn of the present century, says:

"Evening attire was very simple, neither paint nor powder was worn, the hair was somewhat dishevelled, a diadem of gems, a tunic of lace, no bodice to speak of, no hoops, and a quantity of flowers, where much affected."

We must not lose sight of the part the girdles played in the dress of these Directoire ladies.

There were just two girdles in fashion—the Venus girdles, for young matrons, worn just below the bust; the girdle of Diana, for young girls, fastened lower round the waist.

The girdle in gold, studded with jewels, composed of cameos, and fastened with a buckle delicately and curiously worked, was one of the prettiest items of feminine dress.

A CELEBRATED Persian sage gave his advice concerning the choice of a wife: "Choose no woman whose lips drop at the corners or your life will be a perpetual mourning, nor yet should they curve too much upward, for that denotes frivolity. Beware of the under lip that rolleth outward, for that woman hath little conscience. Select for a wife one whose lips are straight, not thin, for then she is shrewd, but just the fulness for perfect symmetry."

"HOLD on, Sid!" exclaimed one of the little Rambo boys, as he paused at the door; "don't go into the house. The minister is making a call." "How do you know?" inquired his little sister. "Can't you hear ma talking? She's got her Sunday voice on."

"SAY, ma," remarked the small boy, "isn't it funny that everybody calls my little brother a bouncing baby?" "Why do you think it is funny, William?" returned his mother. "Because when I dropped him on the floor this morning he didn't bounce a bit."

Confidential Correspondents.

CHICKEN.—You are not obliged to keep up the acquaintance of a gentleman with whom you have danced unless you choose.

F. C. G.—You appear to know the meaning of the word "flirt" very well indeed; there is no occasion for us to give you any explanation of it.

LITTLE W.—The disparity is too great; it is always better for the gentleman to be a little older than the lady, but not so much as thirty years.

M. W. O.—Girls cannot be too careful in their conduct; and it is always risky to permit the escort of a strange young men, unless in a case of emergency.

MAGGIE.—We should recommend marriage. With a husband and a home of your own, you would acquire great strength of character and wonderful self reliance.

NET.—There is no set form for such introduction; you would simply say my cousin, Mr. or Miss So-and-so, or omit the cousin and simply mention the name, as you choose.

TED.—Among the Jews, we believe, it is the custom to have a "given name," which is equivalent to what we call the Christian name. Every Jew has besides a secret, private or "holy" name.

MARYLAND.—The origin of the air, "Yankee Doodle," is involved in obscurity. It is said to be the tune of an old English nursery song called "Lucy Locket," which was current in the time of Charles I.

KATE F.—Do not listen to the nonsense that people talk; there is nothing wrong in being engaged to a butcher, if he is a worthy man. His trade is not a pleasant one, but it has nothing to do with his personal merits.

JELLYBY.—The area of Hayti is 28 000 square miles; the population about 500 000, nine-tenths of whom are negroes, the rest chiefly mulattoes. The language in use is French and the State religion Roman Catholic. The legislative power is in an Assembly and a President chosen for four years.

UNHAPPY.—A strong will and a firm resolution to abstain from the evil is the only real cure. If the case is your own, try it; say to yourself "I will not," and keep to your resolution. You'll find the first days the hardest; if you can keep from it for a week, you will have practically conquered the demon.

LONELY.—You seem to have got into a scrape out of which no one can help you but yourself. We may hint that it was very bad taste to give away an expensive present such as you describe. You had better not allude to returning anything if you cannot send that along with the rest.

O. T.—The words, "egoist" and "egotist," "egoism" and "egotism," are not identical. "Egoists" is the name given in philosophy to those metaphysicians who profess to be sure of nothing but their own existence. An "egotist" is a person whose vanity is shown by the frequent repetition of the first personal pronoun (in Latin, ego) in conversation or writing.

OPERA.—The original of the monster "Blue Beard" is said to have been Gilles de Retz, Lord of Laval, who was born in 1403, and fought under the command of Joan of Arc. He became a marshal of France, and kept up a highly regiane until he had squandered his property, when he took to sorcery and the practice of Pagan rites, murdering many young children. He is said to have been known in his lifetime by the sobriquet of Barbe Bleu.

HENRY B.—Be not dismayed. Obstacles to success ought to be incentives to go on. Perseverance and courage win the battle of life. Were the celebrated Dr. Hunter, one of the greatest benefactors of the human species, started on his metropolitan career, he met with every discouragement. His first lecture in London was attended only by the porter. The great man, by no means discouraged, said, "John, take that skeleton down, that I may with propriety say gentlemen." He delivered his lecture. Such an example of determination and fortitude ought to encourage every young man who meets with difficulties on the threshold of his career.

S. D.—We have often given our advice on the subject of stammering. It is generally a nervous affection, though sometimes there is malformation of the mouth and throat which helps to cause it; this does not appear to be the case with you. Make up your mind that you will cure yourself, and you will find you have achieved something, even by that. Practice speaking whenever you are alone, loudly and slowly; when you stumble over a word, pause and try again and again till you have mastered the inclination to gasp and stammer. When you are speaking to others, do it very slowly; think of the words before you speak them, and do not give up in despair because you cannot succeed all at once. When you have mastered one single word over which you have been in the habit of stumbling, you will have done great things, and the fact will show you that the cure is begun. Patience and perseverance must be your watchword. Stammering can be cured, and generally the cure rests with the sufferers themselves.

PEDRO.—The State ceremony to which you refer is what is known as "taking the cushion," and is a quaint old Spanish custom still practised at the Court of Madrid. Its object is to create noble ladies grandees of Spain, with the right to sit in the royal presence by permission of the king and queen. Queen Christina, wishing to admit several of the young ladies of the Court to the higher rank, held an investiture. All the lady grandees of the Court assembled in one of the State apartments, each provided with a large cushion. In the centre of the room were placed a large arm-chair and a low stool. The Queen entered, attended by her suite, took the arm-chair, and requested the ladies to sit down on their cushions. Then one by one the candidates for elevation to the higher rank, each attended by a sponsor, were introduced, and made low reverences to the Queen and to each grandee in turn. The Queen next invited the lady to sit on the stool at her feet, addressed a few words to her, and before rising to give place to the next comer, allowed her to kiss her hand. The candidate had then the right to enjoy the privileges of the seated dames, and accordingly took a cushion and joined their magic circle.